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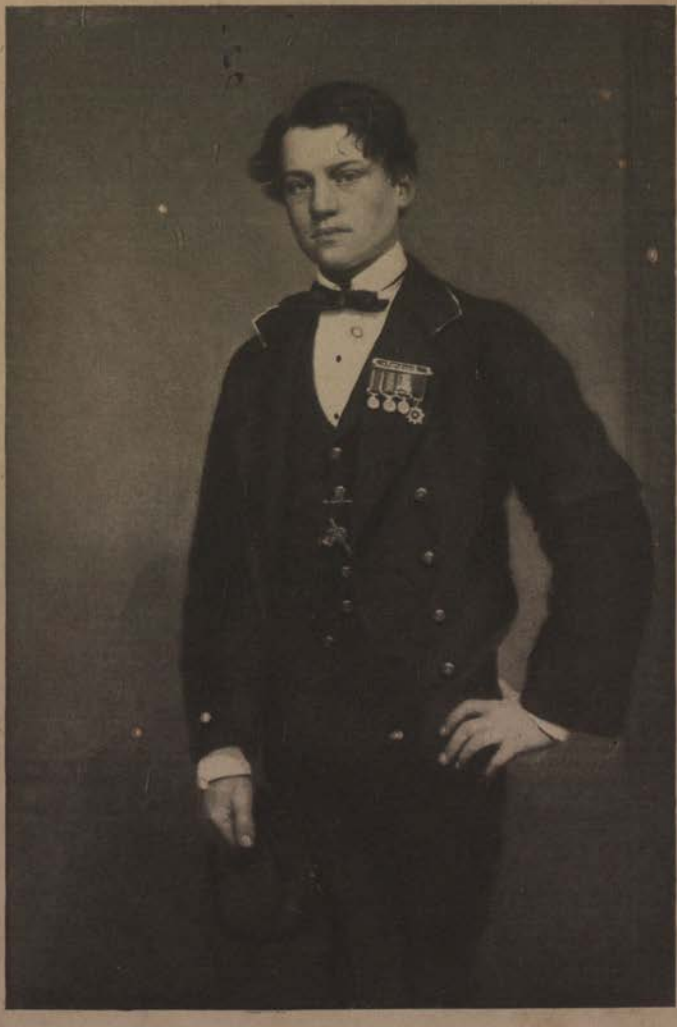
A MIDDY'S RECOLLECTIONS



THE AUTHOR AS A MIDSHIPMAN IN 1856.

A MIDDY'S RECOLLECTIONS

1853-1860

BY

REAR-ADMIRAL THE HONOURABLE

VICTOR ALEXANDER MONTAGU

26289

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1898

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IN MEMORY OF

MY MOTHER

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CHAPTER I

ENTERING THE NAVY

BORN in April 1841, I was about six months more than twelve years old when I joined the Royal Navy. My father was the seventh Earl of Sandwich; my mother, a daughter of the Marquis of Anglesea, who commanded cavalry at Waterloo, and lost his leg by one of the last shots fired on that eventful day. It is said that when Lord Anglesea's thigh was struck he happened to be riding by the side of the Duke of Wellington, and exclaimed, suddenly, "O the Devil! my leg is hit!" The Duke turned round, looked at him, and said, "The deuce it is!" His leg was shortly afterwards amputated. As all the surgeon's knives had become blunt from the long day's work, it took twenty minutes to perform the operation. I was the second of four sons, and was educated by a private tutor.

For some time before I was sent to sea, my father had often expressed a wish that, hailing

from a naval family, one of his sons should select the Sea as his profession. Somehow or another, it devolved upon me to be the naval representative; and, though my father did not enforce this idea, I took it into my head that I should like it. My poor mother had misgivings. She loathed the sea, and could not bring herself to believe that any one else could endure its hardships. She was second to none, however, in her admiration of the Service.

No doubt I thought it a fine thing to don a naval uniform and wear a sword at my side at twelve and a half. A position of importance was assured. Of sea-life I knew but little. I had on several occasions, when staying at the Castle at Cowes (enjoying the hospitality of my grandfather, Lord Anglesea), sailed in his famous old cutter, the *Pearl* (130 tons); but beyond learning, when beating about the Solent, what sea-sickness was, my experience was naught. However, on the 15th of December 1853, I was gazetted a naval cadet in the Queen's Navy.

It was deemed advisable to send me to a school where boys were prepared for examination before joining the Navy. When it is remembered that one's qualification consisted only in being able to master simple dictation from some English work, and arithmetic as far as the Rule of Three, this will seem incompatible with modern ideas. So it

was, however; and I found myself, some time in October 1853, at the school of Mr. Eastman, a retired naval instructor who kept a house of about thirty boys in St. George's Square, Portsea. This mansion I visited not long ago, and found it a tavern of the first quality.

If my memory serves me rightly, we did not indulge in much study at that school. We used to walk out to Southsea Common in twos and twos to play games, and, if opportunity offered, to have rows with what we called "the cads," the youth of the town: a pastime which the usher encouraged.

It was a very rough school. The food was execrable; many of us were cooped up in the same room; and I have a vivid remembrance of the foot-pan which we were allowed to use only once a week. On birthdays, or other select occasions, the chosen few were regaled with very large junks of bread sparsely besmeared with butter, and tea in the parlour, about 4.30 P.M.; our host and hostess being at that time well into their second glass of toddy, and drowsy though attempting to amuse us with old sea stories.

Sometimes we were taken to the Dockyard. I well remember being much interested in watching a Russian frigate then in dock refitting, and wondering to myself why Russians looked so

different from men of my own race, and why their ships carried such a curious scent. This reminds me that often in after years, when returning to my ship on a dark night and not being exactly sure of her position, I have been guided by the peculiar smell which you notice in passing under the stern of a foreign man-of-war. The perfume of each navy is distinct; and the position of a ship, which I recollected from the daytime, was often the means of putting me on my right course during a night's pull.

I do not remember anything particularly worth recording during my six-weeks' stay at that school. Only, on one occasion, about midnight, we were all aroused by the noise caused by the smashing of glass. Running out in our night-shirts into the street, we discovered that all the front plate-glass windows were broken. The master, in his fury, thought that open mutiny had broken out in school, and vowed vengeance on every bone in our bodies. It turned out that Mr. Eastman had been cramming some mates for their examination towards Lieutenancies, and that, as they had all signally failed, they had expressed their displeasure by breaking the windows. No clue was obtained at the time; but I happened to hear all about the affair when I joined my first ship. Three of the culprits were serving in that vessel, and told me the story.

Shortly after this, the time arrived when I was to present myself at the Royal Naval College to pass my examination. The nervous and sleepless nights! Though I felt perfectly capable of passing through the ordeal, the name of the Royal College overawed me. The thought of naval dons sitting in conclave over my work, with the possibility of their finding it defective, was as an evil dream. When the day arrived, two short hours sufficed to get me through. My arithmetic was faultless; and, though I spelt *judgment* without a *d*, my papers were said to be very good. In short, I had passed thus far with *éclat*.

Having qualified in mind, I found that the next performance was to qualify in body. Forthwith I was taken on board that glorious and venerable ship, the *Victory*, to be medically inspected. It was my first visit to this renowned ship; and how well I remember the thoughts that ran through my mind as I approached her! There was the hull exactly as it had been on the day of Trafalgar! I could not help picturing to myself those noble sides being pierced through and through with shot while the vessel was leading the line gallantly into action past the broadsides of the enemy.

Once on board, I was accosted by a rough Irish assistant-surgeon, who, without a word of warning or of good-morning, ejaculated, "What is your

name? How old are you?" On my having meekly answered these questions to his apparent satisfaction, he said, in the gruffest of tones, "Strip, sir." Having decency, I quietly asked, in the humblest of tones, "Do you wish me, sir, to pull off my trousers as well?" "Yes, sir,—everything," was the answer. This was a trial. I was miserable about my braces' buttons, afraid he would see that two were lacking (one in front and one behind); which might tell against my claim to respectability. How curious is it to find oneself remembering such details through life! Having denuded myself of everything,—which was very trying, particularly in a draughty cabin in December—I was put through various exercises; and, after being minutely examined as to wind, sight, hearing, and other gifts, I was told to dress and take away with me a formal certificate of health. I hated that man, and was glad to get back to school in order to prepare to leave for home on the following day.

Within a week from this time, I received my first official document. It ran:—

You are hereby directed to repair on board H.M. ship *Princess Royal*, now laying at Spithead, and report yourself on December the 15th. Should the *Princess Royal* not be laying at Spithead on the date mentioned, you will inquire at the Admiral's office at the Dockyard, and you will be informed where H.M. ship may be.

THE AUTHOR AS A NAVAL CADET, 1853.

This notice gave me a clear fortnight more at home. I had to get my outfit ready, and to pack up my sea-chest. My father had the sea-chest made by the house-carpenter, instead of relying on the outfitter who invariably supplied the necessary article according to regulation size. No doubt my father conceived the idea with the best possible intentions as to economy; but the chest was always an eyesore, and eventually it was cut down to proper dimensions by order of a very particular commanding officer, who could not stand seeing one chest an inch higher than the rest in the long row on the cockpit deck.

War with Russia was at this time expected. Writing so many years later, I can only attempt to describe, from memory, all I then thought, and the pride I felt that I should possibly see active service soon. There was an innate dread of leave-taking—of parting from home for the first time—more especially of separating myself from my mother, a lady beloved by all her children. That was a thought scarce bearable. Many who read those lines will realise too well how sad such moments are: perhaps the saddest that fall to one's lot. Yet, painful as they are, they have their consolation: as showing the love between mother and son. The more this sentiment is impressed on the youthful

mind, the greater the gain in after life; for when the mother is not present, there comes the echo of sweet counsel ringing in the heart, inspiring the wish to act as she would desire—she, the help and guidance in all trouble.

CHAPTER II

THE "PRINCESS ROYAL"

I JOINED the *Princess Royal*, commanded by my uncle, Lord Clarence Paget, and found that beautiful 91-gun line-of-battle ship lying at Spithead, preparing for sea. The family butler was deputed to see me safely on board and report on his return. He had been long a servant of my father—I believe he had been his valet at Cambridge;—and many were the hours he had spent with my brothers and myself ferreting and hunting with terriers; and we were all much attached to him.

It was blowing a fresh gale when we took our wherry from the Hard at Portsmouth, and the double-fare flag was flying on the official tower; but go we must, though our boatman seemed to suggest that we should have a bad time of it outside; and so it turned out, for, besides being drenched to the skin on a cold December day, the butler and I, when we got alongside the noble

ship, were sea-sick. My first obeisance to the Quarter-Deck—(I had been warned to be very particular about this)—must have lacked finish. My troubles were not over with that ceremony. I had hardly finished saluting the officer of the watch when a blue-jacket fell from out of the main-rigging on to a quarter-deck gun within a yard of me. He was killed instantly, and the sight was very painful.

This was a sad beginning.

My next step was to go below and endeavour to look pleasant on being introduced to my mess-mates. Many were the eyes I felt glaring at me to see what the new cadet was made of. Didn't this poor boy wish himself elsewhere? Once in my hammock that night, I was thankful to find myself in seclusion.

For several nights I was on the look-out for the cutting-down process that must be practised on me. I had not long to wait. "Cutting-down," I may explain, means that when you are fast asleep your hammock, either at one end or the other, is let down by the run. If it were let down by the head, your neck might be broken. To be suddenly aroused from sleep by finding yourself balancing by the head on a hard deck is not an enviable position. It was ordained only if the boy was obnoxious; but the alternative, as I found to my chagrin, is not pleasant. Luckily, a marine sentry

H.M.S. 'Princess Royal,' of 91 guns, 1853.

came to my rescue. He helped to get my hammock up again, and condoled with me.

Those marines were fine fellows. They were always considered the special safeguard of the officers in a man-of-war. In case of mutiny or other trouble, they stood by the officers of the ship. In the *Princess Royal* I had, on joining, an excellent old soldier told off to look after me and be my servant. For many months after joining I was too small to swing myself into my hammock (I could not reach anything handy even by jumping), and he invariably came at the appointed time to give me a leg-up. I was much attached to him. Many a time, when some bigger midshipman took it into his head to take some of my washing water away for his own selfish use, my marine came to the rescue in support of his small master. Seven shillings a month were his wages, and on washing days, I think, he received an extra *douceur*. Poor man: he got into trouble later, and had to leave me. I recollect well going to visit him in irons, under charge of a sentry; he was then under sentence of four dozen lashes for having been drunk on board; and some years afterwards, while I was fitting out in a ship at Portsmouth, in passing along the road I heard the voice of this dear old Joey calling me by name; but so drunk was he that he could not follow me, and I escaped. Sometimes, when half-starved in the gun-

room mess, I went into my marine's mess and got some ship's biscuits, which, with pickled gerkins, I supped off. We certainly were shockingly fed in those days. Growing youths, much imbued with sea air, used to fare very badly; but when it is considered how little was paid in the shape of mess money it is no wonder. On joining you found £10 as an entrance fee; and the mess subscription was one shilling a day, with your rations thrown in. The rations were the same as those allowed to the ship's company: a pound of very bad salt junk (beef), or of pork as salt as Mrs. Lot, execrable tea, sugar, and biscuit that was generally full of weevils, or well overrun with rats, or (in the hot climates) a choice retreat for the detestable cockroach. In one ship—I think it was the *Nankin* frigate—cockroaches swarmed. Sugar or any other sweet matter was their attraction; and at night, when they were on the move, I have seen strings of the creatures an inch and a half long making a route over you in your hammock. Some ships were overrun with them. Rats also were a dreadful nuisance: they invariably nested among the biscuit bags. We mids used to lie awake and watch them coming up at night from the hold on to the cockpit deck; and, well armed with shoes, hair-brushes, and so on, we persecuted them.

Spithead, at the time I joined my ship, afforded an interesting spectacle. Men-of-war of all classes were gradually collecting, and the dockyards were very busy; but we were short of men—so much so that all available coastguard-men were requisitioned to complete our crews, which in those days were for the most part collected from the streets.

The war with Russia which (keen-sighted diplomatists warned our Government) must come, and that soon, necessitated active preparations. The newly-joined men were being trained in great-gun drill, and target practice was always going on.

My ship was a battleship of about 3400 tons, and said to be quite the prettiest of her class. We were afterwards styled the *Pretty Royal;* which so much pleased the middies that we all bought eye-glasses, and wore them, when not on duty, by way of swagger. We carried 32-pounders on the main and the upper deck, and 56-pounders on the lower deck, throwing hollow shot; with one solid 68-pounder on the forecastle. Our full-steam speed under favourable conditions was nine knots; but this speed under steam was of rare occurrence —eight knots was usual. We had a complement of 850 men and officers.

In the gun-room (or midshipmen's) mess we numbered about twenty-four, all told. I grieve to say that we had a few very bad specimens of the

British officer: bad both professionally and socially. Though discipline was generally very strict on deck and on duty, irregularities went on below that were winked at, and in later days would not have been tolerated. There was a remnant of the bad style of earlier days, without any of the higher qualities of the old naval officer to temper it. One heard now and then of notorious characters that seemed always just to escape retribution; though long before the end of the war three of my mess-mates, if not more, were "hoisted out" by court-martial or otherwise. Bullying also was common. On one occasion I was so much irritated by a lout of an Irish assistant-surgeon that I lost my poor little temper and gave him the lie. Being overheard by one of the senior mates, I was immediately kicked out of the gun-room and ordered to mess on my chest for three days. The punishment was carried out to the full. The most fiendish case of bullying it ever was my lot to endure was perpetrated by one Berkley. I glory now in presenting his name to the British people. He was one of the senior mates. It was his wont to regale himself with port wine and walnuts of an afternoon. On one occasion (possibly it may have been oftener) he sent for me, and he lashed me to a ring-bolt in the ship's side, ordering me to say, "Down, proud spirit: up, good spirit, and make me a good boy." I had to suit the action to the word by moving

the hand and arm down and up the body. I had to repeat the formula a hundred times, while he jotted down my penances with a pencil on his slate. I have always considered myself lucky that I did not cross that man's path in after life. In my last experience with this creature, I got the better of him. The *Princess Royal* was paying off, and the ship's company and officers were hulked in one of the old ships in Portsmouth harbour. I think all our middies, except myself and two others, were away. A signal was made from the flagship for a midshipman to copy orders; and, though I was just going home on Admiralty leave, having packed my portmanteau and proceeded to change into mufti, Berkley sent for me to obey the summons for this signal, he knowing perfectly well that I was just about to go on shore. My answer to the message was that I would come up immediately, but that, as I had changed my uniform for mufti, I requested five minutes within which to don proper dress. In less than that time I had carried out my view of the matter by hailing a wherry under the stern port, popping my portmanteau into the boat, and telling the boatman to pull for his life to the Hard, keeping his boat well in a line with the stern of the hulk. Luckily, the tide was in my favour; but, to my horror, when nigh halfway to the Hard, I discovered the jolly-boat pulling after me like the very devil. "Give way,

you beggar! Double fare! Only land me at the Hard before this infernal boat can overtake us!" We just did it. The portmanteau was whipped up on the boatman's shoulders, and thrown into a fly that, luckily, saw the little game going on; and off we galloped to the station. I did him—Mr. Berkley:—that was all I wanted. He was promoted, and had left before I returned from leave; and from that day to this we have never crossed each other's path.

One of the amusements with which the seniors entertained themselves was slitting the end of your nose open with a penknife. The idea was that you could not properly be a Royal, bearing the name of your ship, without a slight effusion of blood. The end of one's nose was well squeezed, and thus there was little pain. A ceremony something after the style of blooding one over one's first fox was gone through.

Every officer was limited in regard to his wine bill: you could not exceed a certain monthly sum. A middy was allowed about 15s.; the seniors, more; but, as many of them were of thirsty habit, some means had to be found to procure more wine or spirits after the bill was stopped, which usually occurred about the middle of the month. There were several methods. As on one occasion I had to suffer severely for the faults of others, I will tell a story.

The youngsters had to draw lots as to who should go and represent to a Naval Instructor fresh from one of the Universities that it was the birthday of some one in the gun-room, that his wine bill was stopped, and that he had no means of procuring any liquor if Mr. Verdant Green were not able to oblige by lending some. The lot fell upon me. I felt I was running fresh risks; but go I must. I soon found my man, and forthwith told my story and made my request. Instead of my being answered as I expected, by a "Yes" or by a "No," my green friend went straight to the Commander's cabin, tapped at his door, and in my hearing asked whether this were permissible, or in contravention to naval discipline and custom. The Commander settled the matter by ordering me to the mast-head on the spot and stopping my leave for six weeks. One would have thought the original delinquent would have pitied me on my return from the cross-trees; but I was told that I must have acted in a clumsy manner, and that I was a useless cub. The worst of an escapade such as this is that it gets you into the bad books of the Commanding Officer.

Soon after I had joined the *Princess Royal*, my uncle made me his A.D.C., and gave me charge of his 12-oared cutter, a boat which he preferred to the usual 6-oared galley. It was, I think, on the first occasion of my taking charge of this boat

that I was sent into Portsmouth Harbour to fetch my captain and bring him off to Spithead. On my way to the King's Stairs, while passing "the Point," a locality (beset with public-houses) where the immortal Nelson left the English shore for the last time, the coxswain suddenly accosted me. "My sister," he said, "keeps a pub close by, and it is quite the right thing that you should treat the boat's crew to a glass of grog all round." Feeling that I had plenty of spare time, and that it would be mean to refuse this very strong request, I gave permission to beach the boat, and forthwith produced the last of my pocket-money (a ten-shilling bit), in order that the crew might be regaled. They returned one man short. I could not wait to search for him, and I thought it just possible that his Lordship might not discover one oar *minus:* so I arranged that, on whichever side of the boat the captain took his seat, my vacant thwart should be on the other. All went well until we were nigh our ship; though I must own to many moments of anxiety during the long pull off to Spithead. Alas! He noticed the absence of a h
the men tossed their oars in. I could have di
the spot. Of course, we were all paraded
quarter-deck. The coxswain made some pl
excuse; but I myself was threatened w
mediate expulsion and watch-and-watc
fortnight—four hours on duty and fo

off duty throughout the day and night. Within a few days, however, my uncle, having found a soft place in his heart, sent for me and let me off. I fancy that, being an old hand, he had seen how the land lay, and had taken pity on my youth, thinking that his coxswain had had more to do with the episode than I. Needless to state, the coxswain's sister was a Mrs. Harris. She had been designed in order that a bad hat whom the coxswain and the crew detested should be given an opportunity to run. In later days, when the affair had well blown over, this information was imparted to me by the coxswain.

On the 11th of February 1854, the Baltic Fleet was ready for sea. Three divisions (of squadrons) were formed, under Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier, Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral Corry, and Rear-Admiral Chads; and a most imposing sight it was. Besides the line-of-battle ships, there were frigates and paddle-sloops. These frigates were lovely ships: the *Imperieuse* and the sister vessel, the *Euryalus*, were beautiful models, carrying 51 guns. There was a very fine 40-gun frigate whose name I cannot recall: she was commanded by one of the best and most popular officers in the service, Captain Yelverton. I had the honour, many years afterwards, of serving under him when he was Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean; and nothing could

have exceeded the happiness of the fleet at that time. There was great rivalry in those days (and even long before) among some of the ships. Sail drill was the principal cause of it. The ships' companies became so intensely jealous if one or more ships had completed an evolution in less time, that when general leave to go ashore was granted strict orders were given that leave should not be granted to those respective ships at the same time, for fear of a free fight between their men. I well recollect serious rows when they did meet one another. To my idea, nothing could have been finer than the display of competitive feeling. Some of the ships used to have all sorts of dodges (as we called them) to enable time to be saved during drill, and when I was Flag-Lieutenant on the station I was ordered to watch minutely, to see if all was fair play. The paddle-wheel sloops and frigates were comfortable vessels (one in particular, the *Terrible*, carrying 21 guns—and heavy ones they were). The *Gorgon* and the *Basilisk* rendered good service during the war. These were smaller, and carried 14 or 16 guns, I think. Of the liners, the *Duke of Wellington*, the flagship, bore the palm. She carried 131 guns, and was a beautiful sailer as well as steamer. The *St. Jean D'Arc*, of 101 guns, was a lovely ship. The *Acre*, commanded by Harry Keppel, was always what we termed our

chummy ship: the *Princess Royal* was generally next her in the line.

Then came the great event of the day. The Queen arrived from Osborne in the *Fairy*, to review the Fleet before it weighed anchor. The very fact of Her Majesty announcing her intention to bid us Good-bye caused intense excitement through the Fleet, and I recollect well how highly this mark of honour was appreciated. We were all anchored in three lines, and the lovely little *Fairy* threaded her way through the ships as we manned yards and cheered to the echo. After this inspection the Queen summoned all her Admirals and Captains in command on board the *Fairy*, and personally took leave of them all. I was lucky enough to be present, as I had charge of my Captain's cutter; and Her Majesty, on being told that one of her godsons was present, immediately ordered me to be sent for. It can be imagined that it was a most nervous moment for a boy of my age—scarcely thirteen—when I was hailed to go alongside the *Fairy*, as the Queen wished to see me. I remember well my coxswain pulling off a piece of flannel I had round my neck (as I was suffering from a severe sore throat, and the weather was very cold) before I left my boat to step over the side of the Queen's yacht. After the Admirals and Captains had made their last obeisance, my turn came. Standing cap in hand, I made my bow;

and Her Majesty said to me, "How do you do, Mr. Montagu? I have not seen you since you were quite a little boy;" and then asked after my mother, who had not many years previously been one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting. I then had the honour of shaking hands with His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, who was standing near, for the first time, and with the Princess Royal and the Princess Alice, all of whom said some kind words. I felt very proud indeed, after having got over my nervousness; and many were the interrogations when I returned on board. Yes: this was all a great honour; and so impressed was I at the time that nothing of this great reception has escaped my memory, nor the scene as I witnessed it at the time. His Royal Highness the Prince Consort also, I think, was on board; but I did not have the honour of seeing him. Shortly after this the Fleet weighed. Her Majesty placed herself at the head of the Fleet, and forthwith led us out to sea. When the *Fairy* left us a parting signal was flown on board the *Fairy*, the whole Fleet cheering Her Majesty's departure. It was one of the grandest scenes imaginable: God be praised for having spared our gracious Sovereign to be reigning over her loving subjects still. In a man-of-war we are all constantly reminded of our Sovereign and the honour due to her station. At eight o'clock, when the colours are hoisted, the

band plays our National Anthem, and all officers and men salute the colours as they are hoisted to the Peak. The Quarter-Deck is always saluted when officer or man comes on to it: simply because it is the Queen's Quarter-Deck, and is honoured as such. At every mess, when the wine is passed round, our first duty is to recollect our Sovereign and raise our glasses to "The Queen (God bless her)!" All these matters tend to keep us in perpetual recollection of our Queen and the duties we owe to Her Majesty; and it is indeed a fine sentiment.

The *Princess Royal* called in at the Downs, and embarked an officer; and our last letters were sent on shore. On our way across the North Sea the Fleet was scattered in a fog. Our first rendezvous was Wingo Sound; and by degrees the ships rejoined, and we made that place our first anchorage. The ice farther north had not broken up: so there was a good deal of delay and cruising about.

The Fleet generally was sailing under very easy canvas (double-reefed topsails), as the wind was pretty strong, and we used to wear in succession after a few hours' sail on one tack. Day after day this went on; and the only interest I took in it was in watching the ships while the evolution of wearing was going on: turning through the curve of a half circle, endeavouring to keep their proper distances apart. Of course, some of the ships

carried more sail than others, as there was a material difference in their respective speeds. It was monotonous work, and, the weather being still cold and occasionally pretty rough, many of us suffered a good deal from sea-sickness and ennui. The paddle steamers used to ply across to Copenhagen, or other port, for fresh food; but I do not think the blue-jackets got much of this fare, and I know the gun-room mess did not. Indeed, we had a very wearisome fortnight during breezy weather, jogging about under easy sail off Gotska Sands. All was done in quite the old naval style, and gave me an insight into "the good old days." A great deal of salt pork and salt junk, with a moderate allowance of water, was our fare; and all were desirous of pushing on.

I find myself writing about this time, evidently very homesick :—

> People tell me I shall like the Service better as I get on, but one gives up home and all its joys for coming to sea, or otherwise for honour; one can do without honour but not without home, besides, why should I not get honour at home as well as at sea?

I quote this because it is curious to see how a boy's mind wavers; for shortly afterwards, having seen a few shots fired at Hango at some Russian forts, I wrote home :—

I like the Service better every day. I begin to understand things, and they interest me.

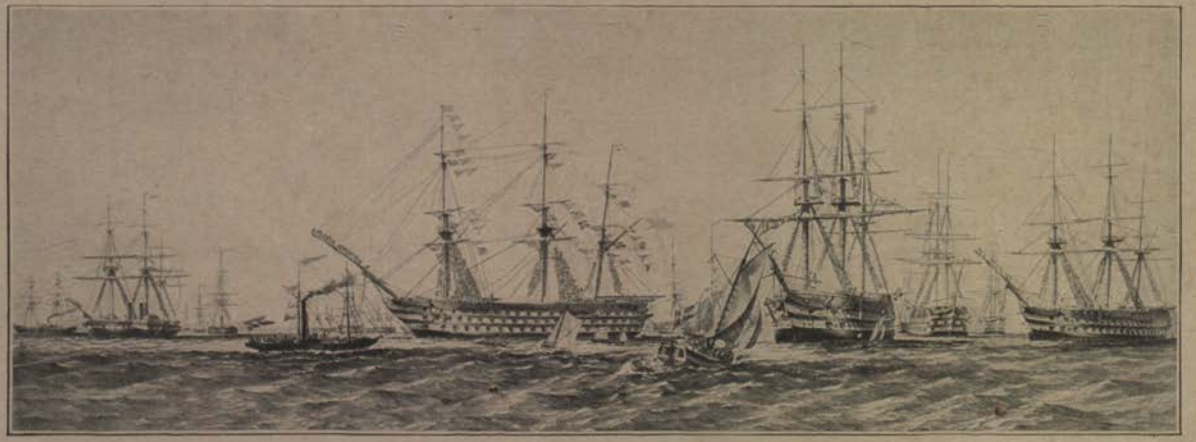
We rode out a heavy gale in Kioge Bay, while some of the ships, dragging their anchors, were steaming ahead, with topmasts struck and two anchors down.

CHAPTER III

WAR WITH RUSSIA DECLARED

On the 14th of April, lying in this same bay, we suddenly saw a mass of bunting flying on board the *Duke of Wellington*. The signal, indeed, gave us great joy. It announced that "War was declared with Russia." I shall never forget officers and men all rushing on deck helter-skelter. The blue-jackets were up the rigging in a jiffy, and cheer after cheer echoed through the Fleet. I believe the actual date of the Declaration was the 15th of March, just three weeks previously.

I shall not attempt to describe what are now well-known matters of history,—the events during the summer of 1854;—nor shall I speak of the do-nothing policy, which (with the exceptions of the storming and taking of Bomarsund, the destruction of grain stores in the Gulf of Bothnia, occasional scrimmages for fortified posts, and the hemming in of the Russian Fleet at Kronstadt) kept us inactive. Our chief, though a gallant man, did



The signal flying for war, and Fleet cheering.

not seem to be gifted with much enterprise (possibly he was hampered by orders from home); but I do know that we all longed for some active service, and wished that the Russian ships would come out from under their batteries and give us a fair chance. We used to see them loosing their sails at their anchorage, and many were the surmises as to whether they intended to "sheet home" or only let them fall off the yards to dry.

They were, I think, nearly all sailing ships; though they had paddle-wheel steamers that occasionally would make a dash out at some yacht that had come out to see the fun, and had got in too close to the batteries. I fancy we must have felt as Nelson felt when blockading Toulon,—longing for his enemies to come out. But, after all, why should an enemy be expected to give battle with hopeless odds against him? Perhaps, on the other hand, the Russians wondered why we did not attack their forts. The explanation is that the channels were narrow, and what they called in those days "infernal machines" were supposed to have been laid down in those channels to obstruct the passage of our ships.

There were some pretty sights to be seen during that summer's campaign. The two that struck my juvenile eyes most were the sailing of our huge Fleet through the Great Belt and the first

meeting with the French Fleet. In the former case, imagine one long row of nearly twenty line-of-battle ships, several frigates, and a few sloops, tearing through the Belt, with a strong fair wind (there is a very clever picture of this scene drawn by Brierly, a famous marine artist of those days), the *Duke of Wellington* leading under close-reefed topsails, and some of the slower sailers carrying a press of canvas to enable them to keep their stations. It was amusing how we middies used to compare notes as to our respective sailing qualities, and argue, till we nearly came to blows, over details as to how one ship could spare another an extra reef in a topsail or a top-gallant sail, or the lee clew of a mainsail, as the case might be.

And what a lovely sight a line-of-battle ship was, under all plain sail—and still more lovely, to my mind, a handsome 50-gun frigate! Yes: one sometimes longs to see such sights again. One of the prettiest manœuvres I ever heard of in my time was done by the old *Arethusa*, a 50-gun sailing frigate. She attacked a fort off Odessa, in the Black Sea. Sailing in, she fired first one broadside; in tacking, she fired her bow guns; then she hove about, and fired her other broadside; wore round, and fired her stern guns. I do not know how many times this manœuvre was repeated; but it was a fine display of handling.

The second incident to which I have alluded

was our meeting the French Fleet for the first time. They were under sail, and remained hove to, with their main topsail to the mast, as we, the English Fleet, steamed in one long line across their bows. We hoisted the French Tricolour at the main, and they, to return the compliment, hoisted the English Ensign, while the bands played the National Anthem as we passed. It was a beautiful calm day, and the sight glorious. Yes: here we were, allies, bent on the same cause near at hand, and past days obliterated from memory. When at anchor together the two Fleets formed a most imposing sight: forests of masts covering the seas, and at eight o'clock, or when the colours were hoisted in the morning, the bands of the Fleets playing each the other's National Anthem.

Apropos of bands: I shall never forget finding, while lying at anchor in the pleasant little land-locked harbour of the Piræus, off Athens, eight or ten vessels of different nationalities. At eight o'clock in the morning, as the colours went up, all our respective bands played one another's National Anthem. The music was discordant. There was a great deal of etiquette as to which anthem was to be played first. Ultimately it was arranged that we should begin with the Hellenic air, and that the others should follow according to seniority of the ships present; but soon the discord became

pronounced. It took the best part of half-an-hour to complete the set.

While the Fleet was cruising off Hango (a fairly strong position of the enemy's) several of our paddle steamers were sent in to reconnoitre, and soon became engaged with the forts. My Captain, Lord Clarence Paget, could not stand a distant view of this engagement : so he ordered his boat to be manned, and we pulled in the direction of the ships engaged. We only had the satisfaction of gazing at some highly-elevated shells that exploded far above our heads, though some of the fragments fell into the water, unpleasantly near. The engagement ended in smoke, though a few losses occurred on board the paddle steamers ; and, to our astonishment, the Fleet retired. I could not see the object of this mild display.

The attack of Bomarsund, later, was a success. The authorities had taken a considerable time to make up their mighty minds when to begin the bombardment. There was an idea that we could not subdue the place without troops. Thus, we waited long for the arrival of 10,000 French troops, which were brought up the Baltic on board some obsolete old 3-deckers in tow of steamers. It took some doing to lay Bomarsund low. We landed blue-jackets and marines, and heavy ordinance from the Fleet, and threw up a few batteries on the flank of the largest fort ; and on a given day our smallest

2-deckers and paddle frigates were sent in to demolish the place. The forts were blown sky-high, and the Russians suffered heavily.

We fraternised with the French Fleet. Each ship in our squadron had its own particular chum, and, besides exchange of dinners, many were the orgies at night. The nights being very short, two, three, four in the morning was not an unusual hour for boats, with lively occupants returning to their respective ships, to pass to and fro.

The *Princess Royal* always fraternised with the French liner, the *Austerlitz*, a very fine screw 2-decker of 90 guns. I scarcely set foot ashore during the cruise. Excepting at Led Sound (where we lay waiting for the French troops), there was little opportunity of a run. An immense deal of drill went on, and boat duty was constant. Thus one's education was entirely neglected: the Naval Instructor, the midshipmen's instructor, was voted a secondary consideration. Let me refer to boat duty for a moment. Great excitement prevailed when the mails arrived from England. All eyes were watching for the signal 768, implying "Send boat for letters." Then came a regular race, every boat pulling its best to the flagship for mails and parcels; and, as it was a case of First come first served, the slow-going boats had sometimes to wait two or even three hours for their mails if, as was

usual, many ships were present. I have seen as many as thirty or forty boats waiting alongside the *Duke of Wellington.*

Soon after the fall of Bomarsund, the *Princess Royal* was sent to Revel, to join the sailing squadron then lying at anchor, or cruising off that port; and after this, in October, my uncle, knowing that there was little chance of my seeing any more active service (and as I was not in very good health), took the opportunity of transferring me to his old friend Harry Eyere's ship, the *St. George*, a sailing 3-decker of 120 guns.

The sailing squadron had received orders to leave for England: so in October four beauties—the *Neptune* (120 guns), the *St. George* (120), the *Monarch* (84), and the *Prince Regent* (90)—made for England; and a very interesting and instructive sail we had down the North Sea. The second in command on board my ship was Paddy May, a very fine seaman of the old school, a man whose name was much respected in the Service. Everything was done quite in the old style; and thus I can fairly claim the distinction of having belonged to the old school—anyhow to the remains of it—as all the ships of this squadron were *minus* engines and boilers.

The *Monarch* was far away the fastest ship, though in a breeze the *Prince Regent* held her pretty close. Off the island of Bornholm we were

caught in a fresh gale; and, the *St. George* being a very crank old craft, it was deemed advisable to send our upper-deck carronades down into the hold. As we were short of water and provisions, the extra weight of these guns below counteracted our want of ballast. A 3-decker in a gale of wind was rather a curious being. Under close-reefed topsails you could not lay her near enough the wind to enable her to meet the seas comfortably. The effect of the wind on her huge sides was to drive her bodily and very fast to leeward: in fact, you simply drifted.

It was pleasant to watch these ships speeding gaily on their course for England. We carried on when the weather permitted. The *Monarch* was generally in the van, showing us a high turn of speed. At sunset, or soon after, we collected and sailed in two lines; and, as was customary, took in a reef or two of the topsails, to make all snug for the night. When daylight broke every stitch was set again.

On arrival in England we anchored at Spithead. My father was soon on board to greet me. He asked permission for me to land with him. Being virtually invalided, I was allowed to pack up my "traps" and accompany him ashore. I can so well remember telling him that I had not had a real good wash for weeks, and that before I was taken to my mother, who was then residing at

Ryde, he must purchase me a clean shirt, as I was ashamed of appearing in a crumpled garment washed in salt water, and not even ironed or starched. Forthwith we went to a public bath, and six new shirts were bought from the nearest establishment to make me presentable to my mother, as I could not bear the idea of her not seeing me at my best.

Thus ended my share in the Baltic Campaign. I was much disappointed at having seen so little active service. Both officers and men shared that feeling. Sir Harry Keppel and my Captain were always urging the Commander-in-Chief to do something. The campaign seemed to have been conducted in a half-hearted manner; but memorable signals were sent up. One in particular caused feeling: "Sharpen your cutlasses, lads. The day is our own." This was made about sunset. Goodness knows what we were to have a try at on the morrow. All we do know is that nothing came of it; and it looked rather peculiar. I fancy that our Chief was much hampered by the Government of the day. Perhaps he thought it would be very hazardous to attack strongly fortified positions, such as Kronstadt and Sveaborg, with little chance of doing much damage, or of compelling the Russian Fleet to come out. Thus all our time was devoted to a strict blockade: a slow game at the best of times.

CHAPTER IV

THE CRIMEA

Our ships had some experience of attacking forts (in the Black Sea) on the 17th of October 1854. We did not damage the forts. On the other hand, we received a good dose in return: wooden walls and granite forts are different things. Then, again, the combined Fleets must indeed have paralysed the Russian Fleet, which was so much inferior. But it was a pity that when we sailed for the Baltic (and still more so when we got there) we were led to think of mighty deeds in store for us. When our medals were presented to us, with the bit of blue and yellow ribbon, many felt that they had not deserved them: and the trinkets were kept in hiding.

I remained in England until the following January. Then, being quite re-established in health, I received orders to rejoin the *Princess Royal* off Sebastopol. It was while I was at home that the news of Balaclava and Inkerman arrived.

Many of our friends and relations were laid low on those battlefields. I can well recall the wave of mixed joy and sorrow that swept over England as the detailed accounts came slowly to hand. My uncle, Lord George Paget, at the head of his regiment, the Fourth Light Dragoons, commanded the second line in that fatal and memorable charge, where his regiment was well-nigh destroyed. It was to him, as he was riding off the field, that were addressed those words by the French Marshal, which have since passed into proverbial use: "C'est magnifique ; mais cela n'est pas la guerre." One of Lord George's troopers, who (I think) was his servant, was made prisoner, and for some reason was taken before the Tzar of Russia. Observing the man standing six foot two in his stockings, His Imperial Majesty inquired what regiment he had belonged to, and, being told that he was in a Light-Cavalry regiment, said, "Well, if you are a Light-Cavalry man, what the devil are the heavies?"

I took passage to the Crimea in a hired transport, and we sailed from Plymouth early in January 1855. We carried a few troops, and a large quantity of stores for the army. Touching at Gibraltar and Malta, we arrived at Constantinople after a three weeks' passage.

I shall never forget my first sight of the entrance to the Golden Horn. Those who have seen it

will bear me out when I say that of its kind the view is second to none in the world. It was a beautiful still morning, and as the sun rose and reflected its golden rays on all the minaret towers and the great edifice of St. Sophia, one seemed in fairyland. The Kaiques, the colouring, the costumes, and the novelty of this oriental scene —all enchanted me.

Before leaving England I had been told to quit the transport at Constantinople, and to report myself on board the *Carodoc*, the man-of-war appointed to our Ambassador as his despatch vessel. I was most kindly received by dear old Derriman, the Captain, who told me to present myself up at the Embassy, where Lord Stratford de Redcliffe wished me to stay until I could get a passage to rejoin my ship on the Black Sea.

That great man made a deep impression on me. Tall and upright, he was as fine a figure as ever stepped : a man of perfect features and iron will : a grand seigneur; and the world knew it. He kindly told me to make myself at home, and to remain at the Embassy until he was ready to start in the *Carodoc* for the Crimea. He was going to the front to hold an Investiture of the Bath, and would probably sail in two or three days. This gave me intense pleasure : I rejoiced at the prospect of becoming acquainted with Constantinople. Lady Stratford de Redcliffe and her

charming daughters made things doubly pleasant. That most lovely and engaging of women, Lady George Paget, my cousin (aunt by marriage), also was staying at the Embassy. Among the staff of the Embassy were many men who made their marks in after life—Odo Russell, Allison, Count Pisani, and others,—from whom, one and all, I received the kindest attention. It was indeed an interesting time: I saw everything, and had a sort of general *lascia passare.*

I was soon called upon to assist in the correspondence department at the Embassy, and many were the despatches which I copied. Every one was overwhelmed with business, and I was only too glad to render what assistance I could. His Lordship was often at work most of the night, receiving and dictating despatches; his breakfast hour varied from nine to twelve, according to his hours of rest. The Embassy at Constantinople in those days was, I imagine, a position of unique and supreme importance in diplomacy. The postal and the telegraphic services were in their infancy. In copying Lord Stratford's despatches I was not long in discovering how frequently he acted on his own initiative and responsibility, without reference to the powers that were at home. No such independence would now be tolerated, nor would it be possible. It is one thing to recommend your views before the home authorities for

approval; quite another, to act on the spur of the moment, and to take the sole responsibility on your own shoulders, as Lord Stratford did. The Turks held him in unbounded fear and respect.

The Bosphorus was a great sight. Ships of war were passing to and fro; transport and provision ships were constantly going and coming. With Lady Stratford, I went over to Scutari Hospital to see the crowds of wounded and invalids from the front, and was presented to Miss Nightingale. How she worked!

Constantinople in those days was purely Turkish. Modern customs were not in vogue: the Frank dress was infrequent. The bazaars were rough and uncivilised. Not until some time after the war was there any marked improvement in the customs of the natives. Trade soon became more general, and, owing to freer intercourse with foreigners, the more enlightened Turk began to shake off the lethargic Eastern style, adapting himself to the more modern ways of civilisation. I doubt much whether the change has produced good results as far as the Turk is concerned.

While awaiting the Ambassador's departure for the Crimea, I made excursions to the environs. The sweet waters of Asia were most interesting. Rowed about in the Embassy caique, I visited most of the palaces, gardens, and other places

worth seeing. Everything was novel. Englishmen were at that time held in high esteem by the Turk. "Buono Johnnie" was the cry everywhere, and nothing could have exceeded the Turk's rude civilities. I was much amused at the way the kavasses cleared the road for one. When you were walking in the bazaars, or in the streets, which were crowded, men and women were sent flying on the approach of your kavass, who generally wielded a big stick. And the swarms of dogs—how curious it all seemed to my young imagination!

The *Carodoc* soon sailed, and in less than thirty-six hours we found ourselves steaming into Balaclava harbour, which was almost landlocked. On passing the towering perpendicular cliffs I could not help picturing to myself the scene of carnage of the previous October, when so many vessels, with their living freights, were lost during a frightful gale on that iron-bound coast. Before we got in I caught a distant sight of Sebastopol and the large allied Fleets at anchor off the coast. My ship was lying in Kazatch Bay. As there was no chance of joining her for a few days, His Excellency asked me to accompany him in his daily expeditions to the front. We were a goodly party. All the ladies from the Embassy accompanied us. We rode or drove to all the battlefields and objects of interest at the front,

lunching generally at some Headquarter Staff, and on one occasion at Lord Raglan's. The battlefield of Inkerman was still full of *débris*. I was astonished to see so many boots lying about —and poor fellows' bones as well. I carried off a Russian musket, besides other small articles.

At Lord Raglan's I came across Frank Burgesh —afterwards Lord Westmorland — looking as handsome and as fresh as he was when hunting with the Fitz-William hounds.

Subsequently we visited the ground of the famous Balaclava charge, and saw some of the remains of the shattered cavalry. The few horses surviving were in a sorry plight. Their manes and tails were much reduced: actually the horses, from sheer hunger, had been gnawing one another. Lord George Paget had scarcely any horses fit for duty the day after the charge. The Tenth Hussars, with splendid horses, had just arrived from India, and, mustering strong, were much more numerous than the whole of the Light Brigade.

On one occasion, while I was with Lord Stratford, there was a review of 25,000 French troops; and I was much struck by their soldier-like bearing.

Within a few days I rejoined my ship, then lying off Sebastopol, delighted with all I had seen, and with Lord Stratford's kindness to me. Once

on board again, I soon shook down among old mess-mates and friends. There had been many changes among the officers; but my best friend, Dick Hare, was still there. The three bad officers had been weeded out. Consequently, our mess was comfortable.

In a letter to my mother I remarked that I much preferred the Black Sea to the Baltic, and that I felt happier—more reconciled to the Service. There was always the sure expectation of seeing active service, and possibly of being in the thick of it.

The duties assigned to me were to keep daily the morning and in the evening the six-to-eight watch. This went on without a break for eight months. I soon became accustomed to getting up at 4 A.M., and in the fine summer months it was pleasant to paddle about the decks during the washing process. When the ship's company went to breakfast, at three bells (5.30 A.M.), I could get three-quarters of an hour to myself, alone in the gun-room, for my cup of ship's cocoa and biscuit; to be followed by reading or writing letters, pondering over my letters from home, and a glance at my Prayer Book, as to which I remembered my mother's last injunctions.

How much I relished my 5 A.M. cocoa! A hungry middy does enjoy it; though it takes the sharp edge off the eight o'clock breakfast, which

consisted of (perhaps) a piece of toughest beef-steak—any part of the animal being dignified by that name. The poor animals, which had ploughed Turkish soil for many a long year, were slaughtered the afternoon before, between two guns, on the main deck. When we were not favoured with these mighty bullocks, it was a case of salt pork or junk (salt beef); these were usually chopped up into square bits, and curried with a ghastly yellow powder. Sometimes we had boxes of grub (as it was called) sent out from home; the grub was much appreciated, and we usually shared it with our chums. Mostly it consisted of jams, potted meats, and preserved milk; but in those days potted meats were in their infancy, and nothing like so good as now. The condensed milk, though to a certain extent welcomed, was nasty stuff: some of the midshipmen preferred spreading it on their bread to putting it in their tea.

During the daytime my duties were very various. We were supposed to go to the Naval Institute for two or three hours in the forenoon; but going was a rare occurrence. There was much duty to be done away from the ship in boats—provisioning, coaling, landing stores for the front, besides attending constant signals from the Flag-Ship. This, together with gun drilling and other exercises, took up a great deal of one's time.

Occasionally I got a day's leave. Then I went

to the front, and dined with some pal in the Brigade of Guards or other regiment, shared his tent for a night, and had a peep at the trenches next day. We could see a good deal of the fighting from the ship: the sorties at night were lit up by bursting shells. By its lighted fuze I often watched the trajectory of the shell while circling through the air, beautifully timed to burst on approaching the ground.

Having to be up so early every morning, I was generally in my hammock by 9.30 P.M. (sometimes earlier), and often fell asleep while the band was playing on the main deck, hard by the officers' smoking resort. Smoking was kept uncommonly strict in those days. The hours of the ship company's meals were the only times allowed during the daytime; in the evenings, from after evening quarters until just before the rounds were gone, at 9.30; and no officer could smoke until he was eighteen. I became an inveterate smoker, and once was within an ace of being turned out of the *Excellent*, gunnery-ship at Portsmouth (while undergoing my examination), for smoking with another fellow on the extreme fore part of the main deck, a locality well known to the naval officers. The sentry smelt the fumes, and reported us. We had tried to get out of a scuttle; but it was considerably too small, and we had to surrender, feeling it was all up, and that we should

have to suffer next day. However, somehow we got off with a deuce of a wigging.

On another occasion I infuriated my senior officer by smoking while on duty. I was serving in the Mediterranean under that great disciplinarian, Sir William Martin (nicknamed Pincher Martin). I was officer of the guard, and had a long nasty pull round from the Grand Harbour at Valetta to the quarantine harbour, to get the Admiral's despatches from the P. and O. steamer. It was a blowy cold night: so I allowed all my boat's crew to light their pipes. On arriving at Admiralty House with the Commander-in-Chief's bag of despatches, I was kept waiting in the hall while the old gentleman was at dinner. After his meal, the Admiral descended the staircase, and, in his usual curt way, said, "You are the officer of the guard, I presume? What sort of a night is it?" I having answered his questions, he said, "You have been smoking, sir!"—"Yes, sir: I have. I have had a long pull—and a very wet one—round from the other harbour." "This is very disgraceful," quoth he: "I will see about this to-morrow." However, I heard no more of it. I always thought that the restriction as to smoking was carried much too far in the Navy. When I commanded ships, I used to allow much more licence than the Queen's Regulations authorised, and I never found cause to repent of the indulgence. Smoking was con-

sidered a great solace and help, and many a dull afternoon was got through by my officers and men over their pipes. The custom of the Service was to allow a sort of half-holiday on Thursday afternoon. The pipe went, "Make and mend clothes." That was a curious definition of a half holiday; but on those occasions every one was allowed to smoke, and it was a *dies non* with the ship's company.

At 9 P.M. the youngsters, as a rule, were supposed to leave the gun-room; the signal for this arrangement was called "Sticking a Fork in the Beam." I cannot remember ever seeing one so placed; but that was the adopted term. After a boy had passed his four yearly exams he was considered an oldster, and assumed a position of more importance. The chief benefit attached to his promotion was an extension of limited wine and extra bill. At ten, in harbour, gun-room lights were put out. The master-at-arms (the chief of the ship's police) came round with his lantern, and was supposed to see the gun-room cleared of its inmates. If the seniors were singing, and there was some particular hilarity going on, the master-at-arms might be requested to ask for an extra half-hour's lights. He would then go to the officer of the watch for permission. Much depended on the conscience of the officer.

The gun-room officers always dined at noon at sea, and at two or half-past two in harbour; but by

degrees these hours became later, though it depended a good deal on the view which the Captain took of the arrangements. Dinner at noon and a wretched tea at about 5 P.M. made a boy feel mortal hungry by 7 or 7.30: so the steward was generally in requisition for a pot of sardines or for a lobster. This was considered an extra; and, as you were limited to 15s. a month of extras, one had to be very careful, and to economise one's consumption. A certain amount of gambling went on over these extras. We "read" for each article; which, being interpreted, means that, instead of tossing up as to who should be charged for the supper, you selected the number of a letter of a specified line on a page —*e.g.*, two two right, or three three left (as the case might be): the nearest letter to A won the supper. At Malta, sometimes, I have been away all day getting biscuit from the factory and filling launch after launch with bags of biscuits: so I used to lunch off newly-made biscuit and raw carrots or parsnips that were *en route* on board. I relished the provender: a middy's digestion is pretty tough. It was considered a great honour to be asked to dine when at sea with the Captain. If one's stock of clean white shirts was exhausted, one generally pulled out all the worn shirts and selected the best to wear at his table. At half-past two in the afternoon watch any middy on duty told the officer of his watch that he was asked to dine with the Captain,

and no power on earth could prevent you from leaving the deck. Occasionally the Ward Room officers asked one to dine, which was a more enjoyable invitation, as you usually sat next to your pal lieutenant or officer, who was in the habit of lending you his cabin, or generally looked after your interests. It was a great boon having a cabin to fall back on, and when fatigued to be able to rest on a comfortable bed. Otherwise there was nothing but a hard teak deck to lie on, and a sextant box, or (what we often used) a couple of nautical almanacks for a pillow.

On many of our Sundays, while blockading Sebastopol, with everything quiet on deck and below, and perhaps not a shot being fired from the land batteries, I have gone down into the gun-room and seen rows of middies, mates, and other officers stretched out all over the deck fast asleep—and in the fore-part of the ship most of the ship's company. Sailors are adepts at sleeping in quiet moments. Small blame to them; for when at sea a constant watch and watch for weeks and months is kept, and there is little continuous rest. I always thought it hard lines that after keeping the middle watch—from midnight to 4 A.M.—you had to be out of your hammock by 6.30. Often turning in wet and cold at four, you could not get off to sleep, particularly in bad weather, because of the noise; and just as you dozed off you heard the solemn grunt of your

hammock-man, "Turn out, sir: it's five bells" (6.30 A.M.); and the longer you kept him waiting, the shorter was his breakfast hour. How one could have wished him farther—anywhere but bothering one! And then his dirty hands pulling your sheets and pillows about, so as to place them away properly in the hammock, and that it should appear on deck in its proper shape to be stowed in the hammock-netting, well scrutinised by some very strict officer of the watch or mate of the deck! Woe betide you if the hammock looked too full of bedding, or in excess of what his critical eye might notice! I have often seen an unfortunate sleepy mid roll out of his hammock, cover himself with a blanket or a rug, and give himself another hour or so of rest by lying on the top of his chest, his own little home; but not much comfort attached to it if you were over four foot six in height.

What I used to hate most — in hot weather especially—was that morning evolution of crossing yards at eight o'clock. Just washed and dressed, perhaps in a clean pair of duck trousers, up you had to go to the main or fore-top, running up tarred rigging, or (just as bad) finding the rigging full of coal-dust and smoke. One often came down positively black, hot, and uncomfortable, one's trousers ruined; and there you were, for perhaps the rest of the day, as another wash was out of the question. In after days wiser heads—

at any rate, officers with more forethought—left off making you wear your ducks on this particular occasion, and the comfort and convenience was a great boon to officers and men. But somehow, in my early days at sea, very little was studied as to convenience and comfort for officers and men.

In much later days I was serving in a line-of-battle ship belonging to the Channel Fleet. We wintered at Portland. It happened to be a very severe winter—so much so that at times our rigging and sails were frozen. Twice a week the ship's company had to wash their clothes, which generally took from an hour to an hour and a half. Consequently, the routine was put a little out of joint. Time had to be made up somehow. The usual hour to turn out was at 5 or 5.30 A.M., to wash decks; but on washing mornings I have seen the men turned out at 7 bells in the middle watch (3.30), on a freezing morning, to scrub hammocks and wash clothes, with nothing but a wretched lanthorn and a farthing dip to see by; and this was the only light for ten or a dozen men to wash their clothes by. After this the decks had to be washed in icy cold water, and at 6.30 these wretched frozen men consoled themselves with breakfast of cocoa and ship's biscuit—possibly with bread and butter, if the bum-boat had come alongside; but, as it generally blew a gale, Mr. Bum-boat did not appear so early. I can vouch for these remnants

of barbarism: I was what was termed Mate of the Main Deck, and had to be up to see the business carried out.

During May the combined fleets sailed on an expedition to Kertch, at the entrance of the Sea of Azov. We left some ships to remain off Sebastopol; but the bulk went to Kertch, and shipped a goodly quantity of troops. The *Princess Royal* took on board the 90th Regiment of the line, besides detachments.

We expected opposition to our landing; but, as light-draught vessels could easily command and cover the landing, no Rooskies appeared to oppose us. We soon had our army ashore on a sandy beach not many miles from Kertch itself. Next day, while we were on the line of march, my uncle, Lord Clarence, happened to be in close conversation with Sir Edmund Lyons, when the Commander-in-Chief, suddenly observing me near at hand, called me up, and said, "Here, youngster: can you talk French?" On my answering "Yes," he said, "Go at once and find the French General in Command" (pointing me out the direction in which I should find him), "and tell him that I wish the English Jack to be hoisted alongside the Tricolour as soon as that fort is captured. Mind and say so very civilly and in your best French." Off I ran as fast as my legs would carry me across the plain. Singling out

what appeared to me to be a body of French Staff-Officers, I asked the first among them to point me out the General in Command. Luckily, that potentate was among the bunch of officers. I felt nervous and shy; but, mustering up courage, I stood, cap in hand, delivering my orders. To my horror, he seemed to demur, and asked me a heap of questions before he at last consented and desired me to inform the Admiral that his wishes should be carried out. I had been told to bring back an answer; but for the life of me I could not find the Commander-in-Chief for a long time. However, when I did find him he seemed pleased. He said, "I see the Union Jack is up alongside the French flag. Well done, my boy! What's your name, and who is your father? Tell your Commander I am much pleased with you." I did feel proud.

There was no opposition at Kertch, and that evening part of the troop bivouacked in the town and suburbs.

Whether they resulted from the pent-up life of the soldiers and sailors, or from the mere longing for a spree, I do not know; but the looting and breaking into cellars, and the consequent trouble, were very discreditable. I supposed it was one of the horrors of war. Among other officers, I was sent ashore next day to patrol the streets with a strong picket, and endeavour to keep

the inhabited houses free from molestation. I took many disorderly men of both armies prisoners, as well as lusty Jacks of the Fleet. However, fair and square looting seemed to be winked at. Our mids went ashore, and bagged no end of cases of champagne. On a subsequent occasion my respected uncle did not scruple at having a wretched old piano taken on board the *Princess Royal* by way of enabling his dear little nephew to keep up his music! We lay some little time off Kertch while our gun-vessels and launches of the Fleet were employed playing wholesale destruction of grain and stores in the Sea of Azov; and they had some sharp fighting into the bargain.

I used to land occasionally, and in strolling about the camps came across old friends that I did not even know to be attached to the army before Sebastopol. Two of them were old cricketing friends: so, no doubt, we got on the noble game and cricket grounds many miles away.

On the 24th of May the Fleet weighed—or part of it, bound to a very strongly fortified place, Anapa, where we expected heavy fighting. Splinter netting was got up; masts and yards were struck; everything was made ready for an attack. Next morning, when approaching this place, the *Hannibal*, line-of-battle ship, was sent on ahead to look out and report by signals whether the forts were ready for us. To our dismay (I thought

so then), we found the forts evacuated, and partly blown up. They were excessively strong, and stood on a very commanding position on high cliffs. We should have had our work cut out to subdue them. How bloodthirsty the middies were! I suppose I was too young to realise the horrors of a naval action, and of seeing our decks strewn with killed and wounded. I never could understand why the Russians blew up and deserted the place. On landing, soon after anchoring, we could readily observe the strength of the place. Some of the works were blown up, and the guns were spiked or taken away—possibly buried. Leave to land was granted; but on no account were we to enter the forts—for fear of slow matches and explosions.

We fraternised with some very picturesque Circassians. I longed to buy some of their accoutrements, which they seemed ready and willing to sell; but, alas! I had no money with me. However, a happy thought struck me. I happened to be wearing a new pair of duck trousers. Thinking that I might tempt them with the shiny brace buttons, I went round a corner and cut the trinkets off. The effect was magical, and enabled me to purchase some of the cartouche-cases in which they carried their powder slung round their waists, or sewn into their rough coats across their chests. They say that exchange is

no robbery. The aphorism was well illustrated. Soon we were back again to our old anchorage off Sebastopol, feeling that we had had a wild-goose chase. Indeed, we were all beginning to be weary of not having the chance of distinguishing ourselves from on board our respective ships. Luckily, my uncle was of an enterprising nature. He formed an idea that it would be a good thing to worry the forts by firing into them after dark. To do this, it was necessary to have leading lights on the coast, so as to guide the ships in at night; and these he placed on the sea-coast on the extreme left of the French position.

The Admiral lent him a paddle-sloop, the *Spitfire*, commanded by an able officer, one Spratt; and for several nights I accompanied my uncle while the operations were going on. Our only danger was that we might be discovered by the Russian guard-boats that were always prowling about outside the harbour mouth. Somehow, they never saw us. After a week's work at placing the lights, everything was in readiness for the night attack. The lights were very ingeniously placed, showing different colours on different bearings; and when on these bearings we knew our approximate distance from the fort at the harbour's mouth.

On the night of the 16th of June the *Miranda* frigate, commanded by Captain Lyons, supported

by rocket boats, was sent in to attack the forts. Unfortunately, the enemy got his range—owing to the illumination caused by the rockets, which lit up the whole scene. Poor Lyons was killed, and there was considerable loss besides, and the incident ended in being somewhat a failure. The intention of these night attacks was to worry the enemy, and keep the sailors and gunners down at the forts instead of their assisting in the siege batteries up at the front.

Next night, that of the 17th of June, came our turn in the *Princess Royal*. My Captain begged to be allowed to go in alone, so as not to attract the fire of the forts by too great a display of firing, such as that of the previous night. Of course, this sort of affair under cover of darkness makes it a mere question of luck whether we should be sunk, or seriously mauled, or escape scot-free. The enemy could fire at random only. We were not blessed in those days with search-lights: in fact, there was nothing to give the enemy a clue to our distance, and they could not lay their guns with any certainty: whilst, we being directed to fire in broadsides only, there would naturally be no continuous firing to assist their gunners in laying the guns.

We cleared for action at 9 P.M. that evening, hove in our cable, and awaited the signal to weigh. How wearisome each half hour seemed!

We longed to have the business over. We waited and waited the signal; but half hour after half hour passed, and nothing happened. So we could only lie down at our guns and take a snatch of sleep—or make the attempt, at any rate. I wonder what many of us thought over during those weary half hours, and whether our minds were far away? Not a light was allowed. All was still, and in utter darkness. The only light to be seen on board was in the binnacle compass on the poop. I recollect well running up and down constantly to the poop to find out the latest news, and convey it below, because at one time we began to despair of the attack coming off that night.

My uncle was calmly walking the poop, in close conversation with the Commander, and awaiting the signal to weigh. At last, at midnight, up went the signal, by lanterns: "Weigh and proceed." All was bustle in an instant; though beyond the links grinding in at the hawse pipe not a sound was to be heard—no boatswain's whistle: absolutely nothing. We were soon under weigh, and off at slow speed. The lights which we placed were plainly visible as we steamed in. It was a most exciting moment as we gradually approached the enemy's huge batteries. The men were already at their guns, and we had placed a few more from our port batteries over to the star-board side, in order to give them not only

46 but also 50 or more shots from our star-board broadside.

Having got our bearings on with the lights (coloured large lanterns), we steamed on until a certain light showed red: then we knew our approximate distance, and that it was time to fire. Up to this time I had been constantly sent down with messages to the officers at their quarters, in order to make sure that no mistake could possibly be made; and the Captain arranged to give the order himself for the broadside to be fired at the exact moment.

I was on the poop by the Captain's side. Suddenly he asked whether all was ready below—the guns being elevated to 1200 yards and loaded with shell. The answer was, "Yes, sir." He said, "Stand by." A few seconds of suspense followed. When the order to fire was given, off went the roar of these guns simultaneously from our whole broadside; and in a few seconds I saw the most lovely illumination of the whole front of Fort Constantine. Our shells had burst beautifully. On the face of the fort, for an instant or so, I could plainly see the embrasures (so to speak) lit up, and, indeed, the whole face of the fort.

A minute or two elapsed before any fire was returned. First came one or two shots; then gradually more; until they began pounding away to their hearts' content, firing red-hot shot, shells,

and chain shot, the latter to cut our rigging. The shells I could plainly see coming over us, some few bursting short; but the enemy must have estimated our range to be 200 yards farther out, for hundreds passed over us, cutting our rigging unmercifully. Had we been that distance farther out to sea we should indeed have got a proper mauling. It was great luck, indeed, that our hull was hit only five times. We lost only two killed and five wounded: all at one gun under the poop: just below where my Captain and I were standing.

I shall never forget an idiot of a signalman who, on hearing the crash, yelled out to me, "Look out, sir: the mast is coming down by the run." This shot certainly made great havoc. After knocking these poor chaps over, it tore up some planks on our quarter-deck, smashed part of the mast, and made a hole in the stern of our boom boat in its passage overboard to the other side. For a quarter of an hour or more these shots and shells came very thick. We loaded for another broadside, but suddenly got into unpleasant shoal water: so we had to turn tail. I believe our orders were not to run any risks, and not to fire more than one or two broadsides if the enemy got our range: after all, our purpose was served in worrying the forts. Though the engagement was exciting, I felt glad when we got out of range. It certainly was too hot to be pleasant.

When the retreat from quarters was sounded, there was a general call for the steward; and (now two o'clock in the morning) potted lobster, tinned salmon, and sardines were eagerly devoured. Many a yarn about the details of the night passed between us. We were afterwards told that the whole Fleet had been watching the affair, which was described as lovely in the distance. Next day we buried our dead outside at sea. Some people think that being sewn up in a hammock with two shots tied to the foot of it, and being launched overboard, is the best way of being buried. I do not. I hated seeing the bodies slipped overboard out of a port from a grating during the funeral service.

For a fortnight we had cholera in the Fleet pretty badly. I think we lost eleven poor chaps in our ship alone. Many others were seized, but got over it. Our men generally fell ill about daybreak or soon after. I have seen them, seized with the horrid cramp, tumble down while decks were being washed. The best precaution was to make every one as cheerful as possible, so as to keep the devil out of the mind. The band used to play off and on all day; while games and smoking were allowed *ad lib.*

By the next mail I wrote to my mother, describing the night attack; and saying:—

I have no wish to go into action again, if I can keep out of it. We were the first line-of-battle ship that has been in at night—and so close! How jealous the Acres must be [alluding to the *St. Jean D'Acre*, our chummy ship, commanded by Henry Keppel]. I have earned the Black Sea medal.

The day after our night attack we were all very busy watching an unsuccessful assault of the Redan, and could plainly see with glasses a great deal of what was going on. For some long weeks we lay off Sebastopol, weighing our anchor only twice. On the first occasion we received sudden orders to get up steam, in company with other ships of the Fleet, and to start for some unknown destination. Many were the conjectures. Could it be a sudden attack on the forts of the town? Or were we off to some fresh destruction of the enemy's positions? Suffice it to say, the Fleet was formed into one long line, and at first shaped a course directly towards the mouth of the harbour, and, on arriving within measurable distance of long shots, quickly turned along the coast in the direction of Eupatoria. All the marines were ordered to sit on the top of the boom boats and hammock nettings—in fact, to show their red coats in the most conspicuous manner;—and even the blue-jackets were dressed up in spare tunics and placed in conspicuous spots, thus affording a certain amount of merriment: the ruse

being to mislead the Russians into thinking that we were bound with troops to the Alma.

We anchored that night off Eupatoria, returning to Sebastopol next day. Whether the Russians were taken in by our manœuvre, or they thought it a capital joke, we never knew. Nothing came of the emprise.

The second time we weighed, the ships were spread out across the mouth of the harbour. We slung our long-range 68-pounders on the fore-stay, and at an elevation of 45° fired occasional shots towards the batteries. I think that we did not do any harm : we could not quite range the batteries. On that occasion one of our small steamers went in pretty close under the land, to reconnoitre; and the Russian paddle frigate *Vladamir* was out of the harbour like a shot, and might have caught our vessel had not one or two other steamers gone to the rescue and driven the Russian off. At night we had to row careful guard round the ships. The Russians also had guard-boats; but we seldom came across them. How different it would be now, in the days of search-lights, steam launches, and torpedo boats! No fleet would dare to anchor off a harbour's mouth for weeks together.

There was great excitement about this time over a person who professed to be able to steal in at night in a submerged canoe, drop an anchor

when within a certain distance of the Russian ship, fire his submarine mine under her bows, and haul himself out by his cable. I believe he was a blue-jacket of the *St. Jean D'Acre;* but, somehow, the performance never came off.

At this time my uncle became very unwell, and had to be invalided. This was a matter of great regret to us all on board; for not only was he deservedly popular, but also we knew that, while under his command, our good ship would have been one of the first selected for any particular service.

He was always most kind and considerate to me; but in those days it was not a good thing for the skipper to have a near relation serving under him. That created a certain amount of suspicion, and at times made me feel that I might be thought the originator of some gossip that may have reached his ears. Having the run of his cabin was a great boon. On one occasion, having met with a nasty accident to my foot, I was laid up in a cot in his cabin for three weeks. I could never get into a pair of ready-mades afterwards.

CHAPTER V

PUNISHMENTS IN THE NAVY

THE new Captain was a horrid speculation to us juniors. When it was announced that he was Sir Lewis Tobias Jones, dread ran through us. He was what we called a "taut hand": an officer with a stern sense of duty, which was all he lived for on board ship. That was his reputation. We were agreeably surprised after a very short time. For myself, I had great admiration for his character, and none could question his great abilities. I was soon made his A.D.C., and got on swimmingly. I recollect his running foul of me only on one occasion; and no doubt I deserved it. It was a bitterly cold day, and (as is the custom when a ship is under canvas) the wretched middy of the watch had to walk the lee side of the deck. Unfortunately, the main trysail was set—the most draughty sail in the world, sending all its winds bang down your neck from one end of the quarter-deck to the other. I felt

perished with cold, and in a moment of inadvertence put my poor little fingers into my pocket, to keep them warm. Now, the weather side is the sheltered side (it sounds illogical, but so it is); and no doubt Captain Jones did not realise my benumbed state, he being on the more sheltered side of the deck. Seeing my hands in my pockets on the sacred precincts of Her Majesty's quarter-deck was beyond what he could bear. He called me up, therefore, and said, in rather a stentorian voice, "Pray, sir, who allowed you to keep your hands in your pockets on the quarter-deck? Go down immediately to the tailor on the half-deck [a worthy who was always seen squatting with his mate between two guns at the after end of the main deck, sewing clothes], and tell him from me to sew your pockets up instantly; and report to me, sir, when he has done so." I fled, feeling disgraced, and knowing that the only chance of retrieving my character was to urge the tailor to "bear a hand"; as the sooner I appeared on deck sewn up, the better. It was but the work of an instant. The tailor twigged the situation, dropped all his work, and sewed me up in no time. When I reached the deck, trembling almost, with my report ready, the stentorian voice had disappeared, and I was accosted in the most fatherly manner. "Now, my boy, this is a lesson to you. Do not do it again.

Go below to the tailor, and tell him to unsew your pockets."

Now, I am going to moralise. I appreciated that form of reprimand much better than I should have relished a senseless punishment such as, unfortunately, often falls to the middy's lot. I allude to the stopping of leave. Of course, that could have effect only when in harbour. Possibly, therefore, your ship might be weeks at sea after the punishment was awarded; and you had it hanging over your head. A boy was debarred from seeing some new place of interest, an experience which would have been more beneficial to his mind than the punishment was to his morals. Mast-heading was another form. "Go up to the mast-head, and wait until I call you down." This, on a rough day was very disagreeable: the jerking of spars (to say nothing of the climb up into the skies) did not abate the feeling of sea-sickness; and woe betide you if by any chance you made an unfortunate exhibition of yourself! Among other punishments was what was termed "sticking you on the bitts." You stood on the wooden framing round the mast, to which the ropes were belayed, for a specified number of hours; and you not only looked, but also felt, an abject fool. Sometimes you had watch-and-watch—four hours on duty to four hours off. During these punishments there was generally one friend who had

compassion on you. That was the boatswain's mate of the watch. When he got the opportunity, he would invariably go behind the mast and near where you might be undergoing your punishment, spin you a yarn of what he had seen in his time, and offer you some consolation, telling you to endure your disgrace like a man.

These boatswain's mates were fine fellows, as a rule; but generally they had to bear the brunt if something went wrong with the sails or ropes. "Boatswain's mate, why the Devil—" this or that —was constantly yelled out by the officer of the watch. Noise and repetition of orders emanating from that worthy were a sure sign that the officer of the watch was not up to his work.

Standing between two guns on the quarter-deck for so many half hours was another form of punishment. This was killing. It often happened that the poor middy found himself in close proximity to some dirty cook's mate placed between two guns for neglecting to keep clean something under his charge.

These punishments were very senseless: irritating to some natures, and disgusting many a boy with the Service. I have known several serious cases of insubordination consequent on such punishments, which stung some characters to the quick. A case happened to myself that I shall never forget. As mid of the watch, I had to

call a certain Commander at 5.30 A.M. Calling a strict Commander whom you very much funked was in itself a nervous transaction. But this officer seemed particularly to love cross-questioning the wretched small boy. The question usually first put to you was, "How is the weather?" followed by various others—some difficult to answer, perhaps. On the occasion to which I refer, it happened to be a washing-of-clothes morning; and this very bearish Commander asked me whether the clothes were up, meaning, Were all the clothes hung up on the lines and in their places? On my answering in the affirmative, he asked, "How many blue frocks are there hanging on the lower lines?" For the life of me, I could not tell; nor could one possibly discover by any depth of reasoning what object there was in knowing how many blue serge frocks were hanging up to dry out of a complement of 850 souls. I answered, "I don't know exactly, sir; but I will go and see." "You don't know, sir!" exclaimed this infuriated gouty person. "I will see about that. Meantime, consider your leave stopped for a month." And this in Malta Harbour—where we had our cricket, rackets, billiards, friends, and every sort of fun, besides a half-crown stall at the opera when we could afford it. The only consolation is that (I suppose) it did not do me much harm, but that, on the contrary, it taught me a

lesson for after life, when my turn for authority came. Such punishments, like flogging, were the remnants of barbarism; and it was a good day for the Navy when they ceased.

I am sorry to say I have often seen three men flogged, one after another. This hateful ceremony invariably (in my time) was gone through at 7.30 A.M. All the officers had to appear on deck in frock-coats, and with swords, while the punishments were being inflicted. I do not believe that flogging ever cured a character. I think that it hardened nine men out of ten. It may have deterred others, and so had its effect; but the crimes committed were often, to my idea, too trifling for such retribution. Of course, in those days prisons—or, at any rate, the means of sending men to prison—were scarce; and it happened that we were a good deal on war service, when prisons were not accessible. But, *coûte que coûte*, bad characters—men who could not be reclaimed after several attempts—were best kicked out of the Service. They are a plague to their shipmates, and give trouble all round; though it was a curious fact that they were generally the best seamen. When I commanded ships I occasionally found characters that were past all hope. I spoke to them, explained matters, argued cases out. Nothing had the slightest effect. Crime appeared to be a second nature: they could not refrain from

the temptation to disobey orders. They were not ill-treated by their shipmates, or soured by constant fault-finding. Their sole object in life seemed to be to go in a direction exactly opposite to that which was right. I believe this to be a mode of insanity.

CHAPTER VI

RUSSIA COLLAPSES

EARLY in September 1855 it was generally known that the game was nearly up with the Russians. Sebastopol could not hold out much longer. The bombarding had been very heavy and constant for some days. On the 7th of that month the combined Fleets made all preparations to attack the forts in conjunction with the land batteries. We prepared for action, got all our upper masts down, unrove a deal of rope, placed shot about the deck, and demolished all bulkheads; and when once the splinter nettings were placed we knew that business was meant. Steam was ready in the early morning of the 8th of September, and, after ceaseless blockading, we felt that our turn to be up and doing had come.

Alas, we were mistaken. It came on to blow a gale dead-onshore. About 9 A.M. our Commander-in-Chief signalled to the French Admiral, "Do you think it advisable to weigh and attack?"

What was answered I do not remember. Suffice it to say that, after all the excitement of a coming ding-dong, we remained at anchor. Wiser heads took the responsibility.

The south side fell that day. We watched the huge explosions of the forts on that side. It was indeed a grand sight,—the enormous columns of smoke, dust, and *débris* flying majestically into the air in great shoots, and dense clouds of it hanging thickly at the base. On the second day this continued. We could also plainly see streams of soldiers crossing the bridge of boats over the harbour to the north side, where Fort Constantine still stood out unscathed. I think many of the Russian ships-of-war were sunk in the harbour at that juncture.

Early in October we were ordered to embark the 63rd Regiment of the Line; and, together with a goodly company of other ships with troops on board, we left for Odessa, where, it seems, we made a reconnaissance only, our real object being Kimburn, a fortified spit near the entrance of the Sea of Azov. Arriving off Kimburn, we transferred our freight of soldiers to the *Vulcan*, transport ship, and prepared to attack the fortifications. I find myself writing home by next mail as follows:—

We arrived at this place, Kimburn, about 3 P.M., and anchored about two and a half miles off the forts in

very shallow water. Nothing happened that afternoon, and we commenced preparing for action for the following day, being sure we should attack, but it was postponed. They say it was all Admiral Bruat's fault (French Admiral), for Lyons cannot do anything without his permission, as he is much the senior. We then thought our turn would come the next day. But it did not, and we found it was all old Bruat's fault, for he will have nothing to do with it. Admiral Lyons was very much put out about this, for depend upon it, that if he had been alone I really believe he would have gone in the day we arrived; but he was determined to do something, so he ordered all the mortar-boats to commence shelling the place, which consisted of nine forts and houses. The following day our Admiral made the signal to old Bruat: —"This is a fine day to attack." Answer was "Agreeable." So at 12 o'clock we got under weigh and steamed in, firing our long pivot gun, a solid 68-pounder, occasionally, but not without receiving some shots in return, and some not pleasant at all. Whish! whish! on they came by the dozen. When about 600 yards from the centre battery we anchored and put a spring in our cable, so as to keep our broadside well on to the forts. All this was only the work of a few minutes, when we let drive from our whole 46 guns as hard as we could, firing occasionally with moorsom shell as well as round shot—such a row, and such dense smoke as was never seen or heard. I was constantly sent down with messages to direct the firing, but it was nigh impossible to make myself heard to the officers of the quarters, and the smoke between decks was so dense I could see absolutely nothing, and felt suffocated into the bargain. I must say I was awfully anxious to go in, but on the other hand equally glad to come out.

We blazed at them for one hour and a half before they surrendered; we sent in a flag of truce and asked them if they had had enough of it and wished to surrender, which they readily acquiesced in. I then saw them sending down their troops to the beach, with their arms and knapsacks, and piling them on the beach. We gave the forts an awful pounding and completely smothered them. I must tell you that two French floating batteries bombarded the place all the morning before we went in, so they deserve more than half the credit of taking the place. There were several forts. I fear they suffered considerable loss. I believe we were the only ship that got knocked about a bit: we were struck in several places. Our mizen topsail yard was shot away and our side hit, but we only had one man wounded; and a good deal of rigging was cut to pieces. I am quite a warrior now, three times under fire out here. Yesterday I went ashore to see the place, which was almost knocked down and full of our shot and broken shell. I picked up a few curios, such as a bayonet and a looking-glass, also a Cossack's stirrup iron, and a piece of the Russian Union Jack, which I will enclose. I hear we killed and wounded a great many; I saw a lot of dead bodies. All our launches went ashore the first evening after the bombardment, and brought off lots of wounded Russians to be cared for on board; good practice for our doctors.

We have taken 1500 prisoners. I think I have told you all for this mail, except that in the midst of the fight, I was standing on the poop as usual, when I saw our Turkish pilot suddenly fall head over heels backwards in a large tub of water we had on deck in case of fire. I thought he was killed, instead of which I feel sure he

fell back from dire funk, because a shot whisked past his head. I could not help laughing, as indeed we all did.

Such were my descriptions. I evidently condensed my subjects. But I well recollect feeling pity for the poor Russians, who were so unmercifully hammered by the broadsides of so many line-of-battle ships, our 32-pounders working complete destruction and levelling the forts. At times I could see our shot flying into the fort only 600 yards off. As quick-firing meant approximately three rounds a minute from each gun of a liner's battery, the number of rounds fired can be imagined; though we could not keep it up long at that rate. Captain Jones always wore a tall black beaver hat (which was considered uniform in those days) with what we called a lightning conductor—nothing more nor anything less than a piece of broad gold lace from the crown to the brim. It was an economical costume: off came the lightning conductor when the Captain landed, and he was out of uniform. After the firing ceased his hat caused some merriment: it was white from the smoke of the gunpowder adhering to the nap.

We left Kimburn next day, still thinking that Odessa was to be bombarded; but, instead of going thither, we returned to our old diggings off Sebastopol. The sailing squadron was now ordered home, and the Naval Brigade re-embarked; and

there was nothing left for the Fleet to do, as the south side of Sebastopol had fallen and the Russians were in a state of collapse. So, to our infinite joy, we were ordered to take a cruise into the Mediterranean: to while away the time, and await events.

CHAPTER VII

LEISURE HOURS

We stayed a few days at Constantinople *en passant*. I enjoyed as many hours as possible ashore at the Embassy with the kind Lord Stratford de Redcliffe and his charming family. Then we cruised, spending a few days at the lovely Princes Islands, in the Sea of Marmora; then on to Smyrna. Smyrna was a charming place to lie at. The merchants and the Levantines were hospitable. After their work hours, I used to drive out to their country bungalows, and dine and stay the night; and, by my wig, what pretty girls were to be seen! Lovely little one- or two-story houses, each (generally) with a marble courtyard in the middle of the building, and delicious fountains playing in the centre of this yard, which was a mass of flowers and pretty shrubs — such was Smyrna. The gardens beyond were delightful. Usually there were dances in the evenings (which were deliciously cool), or rubbers of whist.

The bazaars also were an attraction, and very good; and the town to my mind seemed more Turkish than Constantinople itself. Sometimes we gave a dance on board, or took our friends for a picnic. In fact, the sojourn was enjoyable. Dwelling there was a certain Miss Blount, our Consul's daughter. She was considered a great beauty, and was always called "The Fair Maid of Athens," being so like the lady of Byron's song. I rather think that her father was Consul at Messalonghi, where, it is said, Byron wrote his lines on "The Fair Maid."

After leaving Smyrna, we sailed for the Piræus. We stayed some little time, refitting; and we mids got up regattas, hiring the sailing boats of the Piræus, and racing round Salamis bay and islands. Here it was that I derived my first taste for boat-sailing, which in my late years led to so much yacht-racing in England. The snug harbour of the Piræus always had a charm for me. I have often visited Athens since those days, both in men-of-war and in a private capacity; and I know of no better station to be on while in command of a ship. Your limits generally extended from Corfu to Chalchis. Corfu and its islands are perfectly charming, and afford excellent wild shooting. I have made very considerable bags in those parts; and was, luckily, once under the command of a genuine sportsman, Admiral Hobart Pasha. We

used to shoot great quantities of game in the Morea, all round in the bays of those lovely stretches of country. Fifty or sixty couple of woodcock fell to our guns on several occasions, when you just happened to hit off a flight of these birds. Snipe also abounded, and wild duck and pigs were to be got. Indeed, in all the bays there was always plenty of game, and in the higher lands the red-legged partridge. Hobart was a genuine sportsman, and a wonderfully good shot. Every day of the week he used to get some shooting, devoting Sundays to consular work, or to whatever business the ship was sent to do: shooting was more to his taste. We had still better sport up a river called the Jahun, in Iscanderoun Bay. We were returning to our ship on one occasion, having been tenting-out up this fine river for ten days. Our two boats were well laden with game, besides wild boar. Unfortunately, the boat containing Hobart and myself filled and swamped as we were crossing the bar. We managed to touch hard sand when we stepped out; but it was touch-and-go, as the current out of the river was at a great pace, and the breakers and surf were running very high. Thank God, we all escaped; but we lost our boat, game, guns, dogs, and all. The poor brutes swam in our eddy as long as they could; but soon they became exhausted, and drifted away to sea, to be drowned.

The society at Athens was most enjoyable, and the number of times I lost my heart it would be hard to say. In late years, when I commanded the *Rapid*, a wooden sloop, my very dear friend and most excellent Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hastings Yelverton, used invariably to send me to that station, where I had the honour of becoming acquainted with His Majesty King George and Her Majesty Queen Olga. No words that I can use would be commensurate with the marked kindness and hospitality that I received at their Majesties' hands. I spent many of the happiest days of my life under their roof, or otherwise in their society; and some who may chance to read these lines will bear me out in acknowledging the debts of gratitude which those who had the distinguished privilege of their Majesties' acquaintance must have felt for the kindness shown to them on their visiting Athens, and that lovely country-seat, Tatoi. I first knew Athens in King Otho's reign; and I was there at the *coup d'état*, when His Majesty was conveyed away in Her Majesty's ship *Sylla*, commanded by Rowley Lambert.

From Athens the *Princess Royal* was suddenly ordered to proceed post-haste to the island of Zea, in the Archipelago, where the *Royal Albert*, flagship, had sought refuge, having sprung a serious leak in her stern post on the way from Constantinople. We found her with her bows

run ashore, and hard at work having the leak repaired. We assisted, and in a day or two were enabled to get her off. A paddle sloop, the *Sphynx*, took her in tow. We formed the escort, and eventually arrived all together at Malta.

Dear old place! What a time we middies had there! I immediately fitted myself out with new clothes, took a stall at the Opera, and was the young swell to my heart's content. The performances were very good for second-class singers. Some made their fame afterwards in European capitals, and rose to the zenith of their profession. Balls, parties, and every sort of fun went on during our stay. We used to ride in parties of twenty or more all over the island. Helter-skelter we flew along those hard rocky roads, to the peril of anything that came across our path. Cetta Vechia was the famous *rendezvous* for luncheon or refreshments, and the orange gardens suffered considerably from our thirsty mouths. The Maltese, apparently, did not mind. Fresh from the war, we were given unlimited licence in our expeditions; and we certainly made the most of it.

The harbour was always astir, transports and ships of war constantly arriving or leaving: all was interest and excitement.

Malta had great fascinations to my mind. Everything was picturesque: a beautiful harbour,

with its numerous creeks splitting up the town into several small ones: though under different names, it was all Malta. There were an excellent club, races, cricket, and every sport save shooting, though quails were to be found at certain seasons.

About the middle of April 1856 our stay at Malta came to an end. We left for a cruise in the Archipelago: to pass the time during the long armistice, and also, I imagine, to be handily awaiting events while the peace preliminaries were under discussion.

We had not long to wait. A day or two after we arrived at the island of Rhodes the *Spiteful* hove in sight, flying the signal, "Have important despatches for you." These turned out to be an order to proceed full-speed to Constantinople, to hoist our guns out, and be off as fast as possible to the Crimea, to take on board troops for conveyance to England. Hurrah! We were indeed glad to find the war at an end and home looming in the near future. Our guns were hoisted out on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus, and one day sufficed to turn the man-of-war into a troop-ship. Eighteen months is not a long time for a sailor to be away from home; yet as a boy, especially after war service, one felt anxious to return to one's family,—a small warrior full of narrative. My cadet's time had now

expired: so I was able to don "the patch" of white on the collar, and felt as proud as Punch.

From the Bosphorus we made for Katzatch harbour, and took on board a battalion of the Scotch Fusilier Guards, 1260 strong.

We had a fine army at the close of the war. I believe that most of the regiments were on a real war-strength footing. The Scots Fusiliers were a splendid regiment, officered by some of the finest fellows you could possibly meet. Several were great friends of mine for years afterwards; though, as I write this, many of them are gone. Alister Frazer, Trefusis, Astley (the mate), Gordon, Erskine, Gipps,—all had served through the war. Landing at Varna in 1854, they had fought at the Alma, at Inkerman, at Balaclava, and in other actions, and weathered the storm of shot and shell in the trenches during those tedious and trying times. It was a marvel they lived to tell the tale. I believe that only 400 of the men who landed with the regiment at the beginning of the war came home in my ship. Most of the other ships of the Fleet were embarking troops, and every available steamer was chartered from the Merchant Service. The *Himalaya* bore the palm for size and beauty. She was looked on in those days as simply majestic: nothing approached her in size. She was afterwards brought into the Navy from the P. and O. Company, and for years afterwards she served

as a troop-ship with the White Ensign at the peak, and was always, until her last days, considered a perfect vessel: she could be relied on to make her long passages almost to a day. I saw her in 1896, about to be broken up, lying in the Hamoaze at Plymouth; and I could not help feeling a pang when I heard that her days were numbered and she was to be broken up, for a more dutiful vessel has not graced the Royal Navy. On whatever station one happened to be, out would come this glorious old ship, looking as neat as possible, even in her old age.

We in the *Princess Royal* did all we could to make the time pass pleasantly for the Scots. The Mate (Astley) was always to the fore sky-larking with us mids; and we tried the old game of getting him aloft to lash him to the rigging, so that he should "pay his footing" (as it was called); but he was as nimble as a cat, and we never succeeded.

We stopped to coal at Malta and at Gibraltar, and made the best of our way to England under steam and sail. We took three weeks from Sebastopol to Spithead: not a bad time for a liner of those days.

Directly we anchored at Spithead a couple of gun-boats were lashed alongside, and our living freight was soon away to the ringing cheers of our sailors. Again and again this healthy display

went on, until the boats were nearly into Portsmouth harbour.

My ship went into harbour, and was soon dismantled and paid off. Shortly after this event my father received a letter from Captain the Honourable Henry Keppel; and I cannot do better than give a copy of it.—

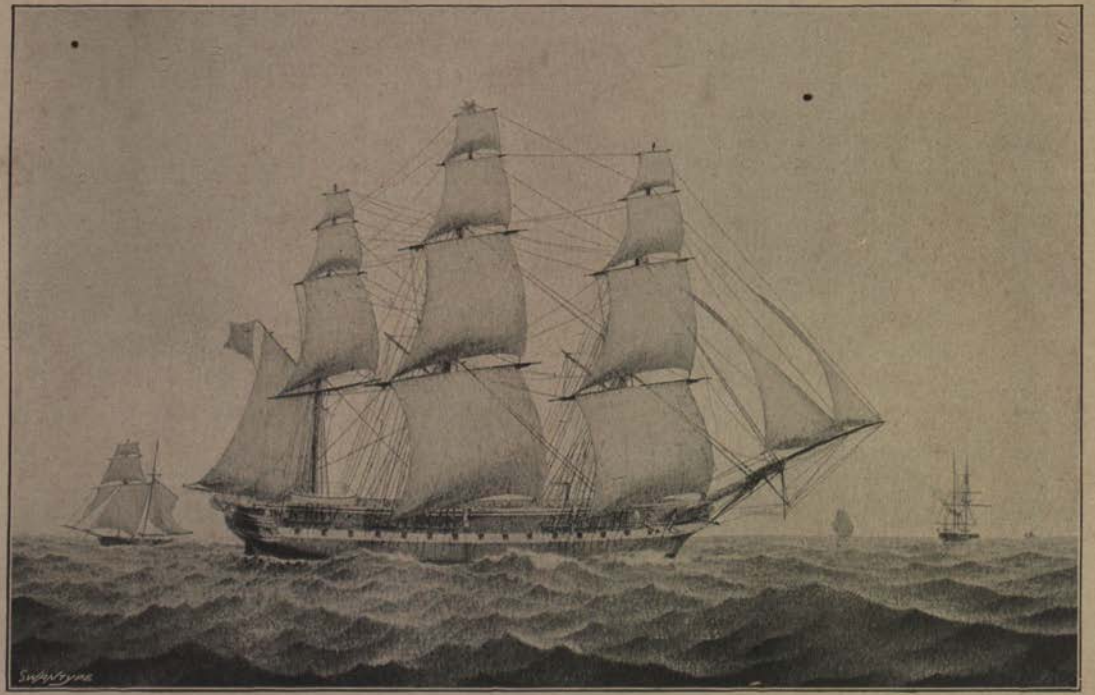
My dear Lord Sandwich—Your son Victor and myself have established a friendship and mutual regard I flatter myself for one another. Should I be appointed to a frigate going to India, how far would it suit you and Lady Sandwich if I were to apply for him. I need not say the pleasure it would afford me to have the little fellow under my care, and I cannot help thinking that nothing is so beneficial to a youngster as the regularity and system established in a man-of-war during a long sea-voyage, and nothing so injurious as the constant harbour work (after the first two years of servitude) of a line-of-battle ship.—Allow me, my dear Lord, to remain, Yours very truly, Henry Keppel.

How this letter describes the man who wrote it! It is so full of kind solicitude that, I am sure, he thought not of his own interests, but only of the good it would do me to go out on a long commission, and gain a deal of sea experience into the bargain, as he was about to hoist his pennant in a sailing frigate. He knew, also, how the war had kept us mids away from regular study in navigation and other branches of our profession.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME DISTINGUISHED SAILORS

WITHIN a month of the letter from Captain Keppel to my father, I was appointed to the *Raleigh*, sailing frigate of 50 guns, then fitting out for the East Indies and China stations. I recall vividly the honour I felt at the idea of serving under that Captain. I had been thrown in with him all through the Baltic and the Crimean campaigns. I did not serve in the Naval Brigade ashore; but he was the constant companion of my uncle when opportunities offered, and in that way I saw a deal of him. Throughout the war Captain Keppel and Lord Clarence Paget were always putting their heads together, trying to infuse more spirit into what was done. Well do I recollect overhearing their remarks, especially those in reference to the Baltic Do-Nothing Policy—how it affronted these enterprising minds! Keppel was full of dash and fire, though always blessed with an iron nerve. His was not a nature that ever contemplated failure.



H.M.S. 'Raleigh,' 50-gun sailing frigate, wrecked off Macao (China), the 14th April 1857.

I had plenty of opportunities of finding this out. I was not destined to serve long under his command; but I learnt to admire his love for the Service. I have heard it said that he did not study the possibilities of risk enough: that at times he was too adventurous. Where and when did he fail? Let us leave well alone. He was the most genial of men, with the kindest of hearts. A great disciplinarian he was not. Still, in a service like the Navy you are as much in need of a character like Keppel as you are of a Sir William Martin. Both are admirable in their different ways. In the one case you train a man to perfect discipline; in the other you make use of that discipline and steadiness when the moment of dash is required. One man may shine in one particular sphere; another shines elsewhere; and both may be invaluable officers. I have known Captains who (either from their own peculiar natures, or perhaps from having been so trained in their younger days) apparently thought it absolutely wrong to hold friendly intercourse with their subordinates on board ship: they could not bear the idea of a friendly Good-morning, and seemed glued to the notion that all discipline was at an end if the symptom of a joke appeared. Talking of a friendly Good-morning puts me in mind of what occurred between a young lieutenant just joined and an officer I knew very well, who, though a most pleasant man off duty, had very

strong opinions as to the sanctity of being on duty: he carried them to such an extent that he would not even shake hands with any Captain of his own standing who might happen to call on board his ship. The young lieutenant was keeping the morning watch for the first time, and at about 7.30 A.M. the Commander of the ship came up on the poop before the morning evolution of crossing yards and so on. As he approached the lieutenant the latter said, "Good-morning, sir." To that no answer was given. Thinking that the Commander had not heard his salutation, the lieutenant repeated it. Thereupon the Commander turned round and asked, "What is that you say?" The lieutenant answered, "Oh! I was only saying Good-morning to you, sir." "Oh! were you? I will tell you, once for all, there is no Good-morning here, sir. It's all work." What the young lieutenant thought I must leave to my readers to imagine. The whole episode was so characteristic of the Commander that when I heard the story I would have laid a thousand to one that I knew the man; and a finer officer or more agreeable man in any other capacity it was hard to find. Of course, you soon learnt to fear and respect such an officer; but if he were not a splendid professional man, and withal a gentleman, his figure of merit did not always shine in the Service. It is a singular fact that no body of men are so alive as the blue-jackets

as to what constitutes gentlemanly bearing, or the combination of officer and gentleman. They know well enough the good tone it produces in a man-of-war, and they overlook many a rebuff and many a failing on the part of a gentleman. I have never in my career in the Navy seen or heard of anything more approaching perfection than the once famous *Marlborough*, flagship, in the Mediterranean, flying the flag of Sir William Martin, who had Sir Houston Stewart as his Flag-Captain and the late Sir Thomas Brandreth as Commander. Here were officers of remarkable qualities. Here was a ship the very home of discipline. All on board were happy and contented. In fact, she was what was termed a "happy ship." The officers were sportsmen and cricketers: off-duty was one thing, and on-duty another. I must quote a little episode that added to my admiration for that ship.

I was serving as second lieutenant in a despatch boat, the *Foxhound*, in the Mediterranean, commanded by the Honourable A. C. Hobart, afterwards Hobart Pasha, who served in the Turkish Navy for some years. The Commander-in-Chief had been for some three or four days inspecting my ship, and we had arrived at the last subject of inspection—the boats manned and armed. I was ordered to take all our boats alongside the flagship, to be examined in detail. No sooner was I along-

side than Captain Stewart came down the accommodation ladder to confer about my boats. Just at that moment the pipe went on board the *Marlborough* to cross royal yards and loose sails. The ship had been refitting; her topmasts were struck; the yards were down and across the hammock nettings. Thus, as all sailors will understand, the evolution about to be performed was a very big business. No sooner was the pipe given than 1300 men forming the crew were rushing to their stations up ladders and hatchways; and, beyond the pit-a-pat of feet, not a sound was to be heard. Stewart, bored to death at having to inspect my boats at that moment, instead of being at his post on the poop, said to me, by way of consolation, "Montagu, can you hear a pin drop?" He meant to indicate how proud he felt that his 1300 men were rushing to their stations in perfect silence. "Well, sir," I answered, "it's a remarkable sign of the order of your ship that not a sound is to be heard." "Yes, Montagu: this is the ship you ought to be in," he said. Beyond an occasional order from the Commander aft, or from the first lieutenant forward, no human voice, as a rule, was heard; and most of the orders were carried out by flag-signals. If any voice was heard, or the slightest confusion arose on any part of the deck, or aloft, the bugle immediately sounded the "Still"; and not a soul moved. It was curious to

see the strange positions of arms and legs at such moments. I believe that the bugle on deck was first used in the *Marlborough;* and, to my mind, it did heighten immensely the discipline of a ship's company. If a dilemma occurred, the bugle was sounded; and the men were so trained to it that all orders could be spoken quietly, steadying everything on the spot. I need not say that my inspection ended soon. Captain Stewart glanced into the boats, and, not being able to resist the temptation to go on to his poop, whispered to me, "Go back to your ship: your boats are all correct."

On being appointed to the *Raleigh*, Keppel was given the rank of Commodore, as second in command of the China station, our destination. Consequently, we flew a blue broad pennant at the fore; and I was very proud of this, as, on joining, I was made his signal midshipman. The other midshipmen in command of boats very soon had the blue burgee painted on the bows of their craft.

Keppel, I believe, chose all his officers himself; a better lot never set foot on board ship; and there was every prospect of a long and happy commission. *Mais l'homme propose, et Dieu dispose.* We were ready for sea about the middle of October 1856, and sailed out of Portsmouth Harbour with studding-sails set. Tugs were handy; but Keppel disdained the use of them, much to the

Port Admiral's discomfort. We, most of us, had a goodly number of relations on board: in fact, the ship was crowded with sight-seers, some of whom even went up into the tops. I do not know for certain, but it is said that the *Raleigh* was the last sailing frigate that left the harbour under canvas. We left Spithead on the 26th of October 1856, and, after a dead beat down Channel, called in at Plymouth for final orders. Here we dispatched our last letters home. Mine was my last from English shores to my mother. From Plymouth we shaped course to Madeira, and took ten days on the passage, meeting with strong contrary winds the latter part of the time. How strange is the difference of being in ship and making a passage from port to port with the use of sail power alone—no steam to fall back on in case of emergency! And how much more interesting, and even exciting, it was on entering and leaving a port, particularly if your ship was well manœuvred, while you were threading your way into some difficult harbour full of shipping to pick up a snug berth among the crowd! At sea one is constantly on the look-out for the weather (change of wind and so forth), taking advantage of every opportunity to get on by crowding a press of sail on the ship when opportunity offers. Sailing in and out of harbour required a deal of judgment and prompt decision: any one having two minds

at a critical juncture would be bound to come to grief. In the Mediterranean in later years I had command of a wooden sloop. We had engines and boilers. They were seldom used save in some duty requiring despatch; but I enjoyed running into (or even beating in and out of) the small harbour of the Piræus, and it was wonderful how the ship's company worked on such occasions, all knowing perfectly well the absolute necessity of flying to their ropes as occasion required.

A run ashore at Madeira was very pleasant. There, for the first time, I saw tropical vegetation. Of course, we rattled about in our sleighs, and enjoyed the well-known trips up the mountains. The Commodore had intended visiting Rio on the way to the Cape, but, owing to our having been retarded when making Madeira, had to give up that plan. From Madeira we stood away for the coast of South America, until we reached a latitude and longitude putting us 100 miles or so off the coast of Pernambuco; and then, steering south for ten or twelve days, we struck into strong westerly winds, which carried us across to the Cape, preserving, approximately, the same latitude right across the ocean. In spite of the long detour, our passage to the Cape lasted only twenty-eight days; which, at that time, was considered a record for a sailing ship. We had

a fair wind all the way, and were not much delayed while crossing the line. Keppel was good at carrying on, and not a man to lose a minute on a passage. We carried away a goodly number of spars before we got to the Cape, and before we got to China we had not a spare spar left. Spare top-gallant masts were requisitioned, and our "sweeps" were cut up for studding-sail-booms and yards. Sweeps were huge oars, to be worked out of a main-deck port during calms; but I do not suppose that they would have been of much help in propelling a 50-gun frigate.

Our best run in the twenty-four hours between South America and the Cape was 296 knots. For six days we averaged 275 miles a day—no great speed in the present day, but considered a very high rate for a sailing frigate forty years ago.

CHAPTER IX

PLAY ON BOARD; AND SOME DUTIES

ONE day was much like another, though, I am sure, we middies enjoyed the whole business. There was constant interest in watching the good ship speeding along, driving great bow waves in front of her, the foam churning up along her sides as she passed swiftly through the water. Occasionally some studding-sail-boom would carry away, or ropes attached to it would break; and we watched the degrees of seamanship exercised by the various officers in getting sails reset as speedily as possible. This caused rivalry between the middies, as we naturally backed up the lieutenants to whose watches we were appointed; and one constantly heard recriminations down below. "I say, Jimmy, what a mess you made of your topmast studding-sail last night in the middle watch: you got your sail before all, and there you were." "Oh," another would say, "you have nothing to swagger about. Look at last Thursday in the morning

watch. You were an hour crossing those royal yards and setting the sails, and then you had to rig and unrig the gear half a dozen times over. I am sure the Commodore has his eye on you, and it will serve you right if you get leave stopped when we get in." These conversations at times waxed warm, but were generally hushed by some senior in the mess, who, taking his afternoon's "stretch off the land" in the shape of a good snooze, would be very angry at being disturbed. In the evenings, after quarters (parade), the upper deck was devoted to games—single-stick and sky-larking. Leap-frog round the decks was a favourite escapade. Sling the monkey was another. That was a boisterous amusement. One of us was slung in a rope fastened round the waist; with knotted handkerchiefs, the others set to work to lash the unfortunate person who was slung; and he, in his turn, swung himself desperately about, endeavouring to hit one of the crowd with his knotted piece of rope. If he caught a fellow fairly he came out of the sling, and the other slipped into his place. When the ship was rolling about, the game required much balance and judgment. Lacking those qualities, the person in the sling would get nasty knocks against the masts or ship's side. However, a young gun-room officer was pretty tough, and scarcely ever came to grief enough to hurt him-

self. The crew had their games on the forecastle, and as the evening wore on songs became general. 100 or 150 men would sit round together and sing in great choruses. The airs were very distinct right aft, in spite of the noise of the water alongside, as, the yards being nearly square, the sounds echoed off the sails beautifully. In the night watches it often happened that not a sail or a rope was touched for nights together, so steady and true was the wind. These moderate westerly gales were exactly like trade winds, and in the trades for days nothing aloft is touched. Generally towards the end of the night watch a little supper was carried on between the officers of the watches. The junior mid had to make cocoa or coffee, and to this were added sardines, or potted salmon and lobster. The meal was looked on as a great relish about six bells in the middle watch—3 o'clock in the morning. During the first watch it was indulged in earlier, before the lights were put out: we generally asked the officers whose turn it was for "all night in" to relieve us for a quarter of an hour, when we went below to devour some cold supper. "All night in" was a great boon. It generally occurred every fourth night. When we were in what was termed four watches, it always fitted in: when in three watches, the morning watch was considered the best rest; and this always came to one's turn every third night,

and meant being on deck at 4 A.M. The matter I disliked most was the short allowance of time after being called to appear on deck at night to relieve the watch—though I generally contrived to be called, if I could, five minutes to the time. As soon as the eight bells had rung the boatswain mate went below to rouse up the coming watch, and in eight minutes the new watch was called to be mustered. In cold wet weather, turning out of a warm hammock, and having only eight minutes to dress and appear on deck, was rather short work.

Then came the horrid ordeal of calling out hundreds of names while mustering the watch. In a line-of-battle ship it meant 350 names or thereabouts, and the wretched mid was nearly choked before he got half-way through. Whatever the weather was, this muster process had to be got through as quickly as possible, for the old watch was not free to turn in before the muster was over. Soon after daylight, when the decks were washed, all sails that so required were reset, and any sail that had been taken off the ship the evening before for precautionary measures was set again in moderate weather.

We crossed the line the day after Christmas; and, the weather being warm and calm, there was a rare ado, with the usual ceremonies attending the event. In fact, one lived in salt water most of the day. Every new hand had to be ducked and

shaved by Neptune's satellites, and some rough play ensued. My duties during this long cruise were those of signal mid to the Commodore, a sort of deputy flag-lieutenant. He was very particular about being informed, when I called him at 5.30, what vessels were in sight at daylight. All I saw had to be thoroughly described. By eight o'clock I was always ready for my breakfast, which I invariably ate in the Commodore's mess, with the Captain and the Secretary. This was lucky, as in the gun-room we were reduced to salt pork and biscuit after a week or two out. In spite of our being always on a strict allowance, water was at times scarce.

I can recollect only one unpleasant occurrence on our way out to the Cape. The ship caught fire aft in the slop-room, a store where the men's clothing was kept, and in close proximity to the magazine; which was rather shaking to the nerves. The fire bell rang immediately, and we were all at our stations in a few moments. This was about 7.30 in the morning. My station was on the quarter-deck, where I had to place sentries with a view to preventing men from jumping overboard in panic terror, and also to see hammocks passed down in case of necessity. The marine on sentry walked up and down with a fixed bayonet. I cannot say it was pleasant to see smoke issuing up the after hatchways. At any moment one might

go sky-high if the magazine exploded. The Commodore was one of the first down to play the hose on the smouldering matter; and it was amusing to see him rush down the after ladder with nothing on but a pair of deck trousers and a flannel jersey. Sail was immediately shortened, and the ship so placed as to prevent any draught going below. After half an hour's pumping the fire was subdued, and I well remember watching the gradual return of smiling countenances after the gloom of the anxious half-hour. While walking the deck I knew nothing of what was going on below; but I heard afterwards that the outer lining of the magazine bulkhead had been burnt through, separating our little outside world from the powder by not much to spare. I can remember the feeling of relief it afforded me to hear the word passed up the hatchway that the fire was being got under, and still more to hear the pipe, "Return fire stores."

On such occasions—and in the same way when in action, if the truth were known—there are, I believe, few men who do not feel a certain anxiety. Personally I always found that I felt less anxiety when moving about in action. On board ship you are like a stationary target. When fighting on land and constantly on the move there is far less of this emotion running through your mind.

CHAPTER X

PIRATE-HUNTING; AND A DINNER PARTY

THE only time I can recollect being in comparatively abject terror, knowing that I must be killed to a certainty, and among the first to die, was when I was employed pirate-hunting on the coast of Asia Minor, in the *Foxhound* sloop, commanded by the late Hobart Pasha. I was sent away cruising for a fortnight at a time on the south coast of Asia Minor in a 10-oared cutter. I used to lie in some creek on the coast. Sometimes we slept in any old hovel, in any cover, we could find near the shore, but generally under our awnings and sails in the boat; and by day we used to sally out, and board any suspicious coaster that was passing. As it turned out, we frightened far more poor devils than the pirates scared. We were constantly boarding some craft or another, and we never knew until alongside what the vessel might turn out to be. I felt certain that Mr. Pirate would not show the slightest attempt at

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resistance until we were close alongside, and that then he could quietly pot every mother's son of us before we laid our oars in. That I should be the best target was unquestionable. Standing up in uniform, I made the most conspicuous figure. And I often noticed that on my giving the order to draw cutlasses and stand by to board, there were anxious looks on the faces of my boat's crew. Pulling with their backs turned to what might prove to be the enemy was not a pleasant position. I could see, but they could not; and with my glasses I often noticed men looking over the coaster's bulwarks, crouching down in dire funk at our approach: of course, they might suspect us of being the pirate, and possibly send a shot or two at us on spec.

Thus there was a sort of "double event" about this job: of being taken for the pirate oneself, and of finding the apparently peaceful trader a pirate in disguise. There was much relief when we discovered each other's charms; and many a laugh over a cigarette and bottle of resin wine followed, especially pleasant after a long hot pull of two or three miles under a broiling sun. I never caught a pirate; though I had the luck to drive a boat full of the beggars ashore, when they burnt their boat and scattered up into the hills.

The other Lieutenant of the *Foxhound* did not fare so well in his cruise after the pirates. Bent

on a ruse, he left his man-of-war's boat, hired a native caique, and sailed about, disguising his crew by making them wear the regular Greek dress, in which he attired himself as well.

Unfortunately, the Pasha of Rhodes had left in a Turkish gun-boat bound for Smyrna, and, on calling in at the island of Symi *en route*, heard from the natives of that island that a caique, apparently a pirate, had been seen becalmed off the north-west point of the island the day before. This was a fine chance for the Pasha. As it was calm weather, he sallied forth in a north-westerly direction, and, to his delight, saw the caique in the offing. Guns were loaded; shots were fired across the caique's bows; and he ran his gun-boat alongside. Up went the English Ensign, which poor Turk naturally thought most improper, seeing a Greek boat and a Greek crew on deck. To cut my story short: They were boarded, taken prisoners, and thumb-screwed. No power on earth, for a long time, could dissuade the old Turk from his way of thinking. So the caique was taken in tow, and a return journey made to Rhodes, where all on board seemed like to be thrown into a dungeon. Luckily, there happened to be in their gun-boat a Scotch engineer who, on being called up, soon discovered who everybody was, and explained the ruse. The poor old Pasha would even then not have it for a

long time, and kept them prisoners for the day; and when he had to release them, was furious at having been taken in himself.

As soon as the *Foxhound* returned from her cruise, all this, of course, was reported; and Hobart, not being a man to allow the British Flag to be trifled with, rushed off in chase of the unfortunate Pasha, caught him entering Smyrna Bay, fired a shot across his bows, hove him to, boarded him, gave him an hour to return all the officers' and men's effects that had been bagged, pay a sovereign apiece to all the English crew, and salute the British Flag with twenty-one guns—or be blown out of the water. Poor Turk, it is needless to say, did what he was told. The incident found its way to our Ambassador at Constantinople, and there was nearly a big shindy.

The *Raleigh* anchored in Simon's Bay on arrival at the Cape; and we remained there a few days, refitting and putting matters in order. During a fresh gale we dragged our anchor and parted our cable; but no harm was done, though we drifted rather near the only rocky part of the Bay. All the officers who could be spared went up to Cape Town. There being no railroad, we drove or rode all the way.

The second night of our stay at the hotel, the middies took it into their heads to entertain the Commodore at dinner. That pleased him very

much, and we had a very cheerful evening. After he left, it being necessary to pay our bill, the head waiter, a gray-headed old Kaffir, was sent for. On producing the bill he was much abused for its proportions, and was told that if he could not get it reduced there would be a bad look-out for him. The poor creature reappeared shortly, looking miserable, and told us that nothing could be done. Forthwith he was hauled over the end of the table, and cobbed, we tying knots in our napkins and inflicting chastisement on the spot. Poor devil: he yelled sorely; but we had no intention to hurt him, and did not do so.

CHAPTER XI

WAR WITH CHINA DECLARED

After leaving the Cape we steered a southerly course for some days, so as to get hold of the south-east trade winds, which took us north to the line, making a poor passage of it; but from the line to Penang, by the north end of Sumatra, we made a tedious voyage. We were becalmed near the line for several days, in the doldrums. There was no dependence on a breeze when it sprang up. It was generally accompanied by strong wet squalls, which blew hard for a short time from all directions, and left you again in a hot calm. One hour the ship was under all possible sail; the next, perhaps, everything was in except the topsails, and they were lowered at times. It was dreary work. Worse: the sails were often flapping about for two or three days, in a bit of a swell, with only the faintest of airs to move you along. We did not anchor at Penang until the fiftieth day out from the Cape. For six weeks we had been out of sight of land.

I shall never forget the charm of first scenting the spice islands and the tropical vegetation, long before land was in sight. These delicious flavours came off many miles to sea, and the scented airs were very pleasant after so long a voyage. I was up aloft, as usual, one morning at six o'clock. There was no land in sight, though I could smell it distinctly; and we must have been from 60 to 80 miles from the nearest coast of Acheen Head, the north-west end of Sumatra. We had met scarce a sail during this cruise, and we were glad to arrive and anchor. There was something particularly refreshing in putting foot ashore after being cooped up on board, surrounded with nothing but sky and salt water. (We had become rather short of water, and our allowance had had to be reduced.) When you first land, legs and feet feel rather cramped, and one's body is sadly out of condition, even at the happy age of sixteen.

At Penang, where we first touched, we heard that war with China was imminent. Our stay, therefore, was cut very short. We stopped only long enough to get in water and fresh provisions. Our next point was Singapore; and getting through the Straits of Malacca took some doing in a sailing vessel. Keppel was in his glory at the prospect of having a crack at John Chinamen and again seeing active service. So it can be imagined how we carried on all the way to

Singapore. Squalls or no squalls, the ship had to put her best foot forward; and, as at that season the Straits are celebrated for violent squalls, we knew what was in store, for Keppel must get to Hong-Kong in time to be in the fray.

I must say that sometimes our nerves were a bit strained. One night in particular, during the middle watch, it came on to blow like the very deuce. Everything, to bare topsails, had to be taken in. Keppel, lightly clad, rushed on deck, and upbraided the officer of the watch, who had just given a fresh order to lower the topsails. The ship was now lying well over; and, as standing on deck was out of the question, nothing further could be done, though Keppel instantly gave the order to hoist the topsail again, saying, "Damn it, sir: we have been becalmed for some hours; and now a squall comes, and you do not take advantage of it." It is needless to say, to those of my readers who understand nautical life, that no power in the *Raleigh* would ever have got those topsails up again during the squall—particularly at the angle we were at, with our main-deck guns dragging through the water.

We had many of these escapades between Penang and Singapore, and were often logged to be going twelve and thirteen knots in the smooth water, braced sharp up on an easy bowline. It was very delightful looking over the side, feeling the good

ship quivering under a press of sail, and with the phosphorus lighting up the whole of her sides distinctly. We used to put every sort of additional support to the spars and ropes on such occasions : for go she must. In fine weather and smooth water, we used to bowse the fore- and main-yard arms together, and get our tacks down amidships ; and we clawed many a mile to windward in consequence.

The *Raleigh* remained only three or four days at Singapore, though we were in sore need of a refit. We took on board a goodly quantity of shot and shell for conveyance to Hong-Kong. The colonials entertained us handsomely. We used to amuse ourselves catching sharks, or shooting at any shark that showed its fin above water. The harbour was infested with these brutes. A few of us took it into our heads (about as mad a thing as we could do) to swim twenty or thirty yards from the ship and back again, as quickly as possible. I suppose the sudden splash of eight or ten of us jumping into the water together frightened away the sharks that were in the vicinity ; the water being very muddy, possibly we were not seen ; but we got into trouble for so doing—and that served us right.

After leaving Singapore, we had to beat against the monsoon, all the way up the China coast, constantly anchoring with a light anchor termed a

coasting anchor, and leaving all sails set, until a breeze should spring up. This was a weary business, particularly amid the circumstances of our hurry.

And now I come to a very eventful scene in my midshipman's career. So far all had gone well with us. We were happy and proud of our ship. Little did we think what a few days were to bring forth; still less, that our fine ship would shortly be a wretched wreck.

CHAPTER XII

THE "RALEIGH" WRECKED

On the 14th of April 1857 we were sailing along close-hauled on a lovely day. A nice, gentle breeze was blowing; land and islands were all round us; and we had got within thirty miles of our destination, Hong-Kong, when suddenly, at one o'clock, while the ship's company were at dinner, the good ship struck a rock. Her bow lifted right up; but not for a moment did it deaden her way. She heaved, and passed on. In an instant all hands rushed on deck, and the consternation was simply appalling. We all felt that a dire calamity had come over us. At that moment I was looking over the hammock-netting on the weather bow, having just previously reported a rock awash two miles to leeward, which I had been warned to report if I could discover it. The sudden impact with this unknown rock which we had struck was so severe that I was nearly jerked off my seat. I knew that our bow had come

into serious collision somewhere under water. We were going about seven knots.

The first order given was to sound the well. In a very few minutes the carpenter came on deck, and reported a considerable amount of water rising in the well. Rigging the pumps was the matter of a few moments: I never saw men turn to their work in grander fashion. Off came their frocks; they stripped to flannels, and hove round with a will. We had two large chain pumps, besides smaller ones that cast out tons of water every minute; and buckets were used to bail water from below; but, alas, to not much purpose. The water steadily gained on us.

As it turned out afterwards, the rock proved to be only 9 feet under water. It was shaped like a sugar loaf, and the top was so small that a boat's anchor could not lie on it. For about an hour we were doing fairly well with the pumping, and there was every hope that if the wind lasted we should reach Hong-Kong.

Every sort of sail was improvised for the occasion—even to setting the sails of the boats hanging at the davits. At the end of an hour, owing to the superhuman efforts of the men pumping, one of the chain pumps broke down. This caused a gloom. After a bit, we tried to put a sail over the leak; but this failed, and no time could be spared troubling over it.

Officers were cheering the men, who were singing; and it seemed to give them encouragement and assist them in their work. The ship now began to sink by the bows; the ports were all barred in; and every gun that could be so placed was run to the after part of the ship. Shot, shell, and every movable weight were brought aft, to counteract the weight of water in the bows.

On we sailed, hoping against hope; but to no purpose. Her bows began visibly to droop, and, matters having assumed a serious aspect, the Commodore attempted to get her to take the ground on the first small island that lay in our path. Minute guns were now fired, and the ensign at the peak was reversed, in the hope that some sail might possibly come to our assistance. A few old trading junks were about; but they took no notice. We passed an easy stone's throw off the point of one small island, hoping she would take the ground; but nine and ten fathoms of water was called in the chains close to the shore, and on we went.

It was a very exciting moment as we gradually neared this small island, wondering what would happen. It was lucky that we did not ground. I do not know how it was, but I personally had a presentiment that we should not have to forsake the ship and take to our boats before something turned up. And my idea proved right. Soon after our passing this island the breeze freshened

very considerably, which enabled our ship to be steered for the gradual shelving mud shoals off Macao, some miles distant.

I reported to the Commodore that, in the distance and hull down, I could see three French men-of-war at anchor, with a Rear-Admiral's flag flying. This was great news. He instantly gave the order to salute the French flag, though we kept on firing minute guns of distress all the while. It was a fine idea: it is astonishing how subordinates gain confidence when complete reliance can be placed on their chief in moments of dilemma: it always encourages the feeling of dogged determination not to give in.

The water had now reached the level of the main-deck bow ports, and was coming in where there was the slightest leakage; and the hour was about 3.30 P.M.

I fancy it must have been a profound relief to the Commodore to find the breeze holding out, and that, bar accidents, in a short half hour we should be encroaching on the mud banks.

So it came about. The mud was so soft, and the banks were so shelving, that, at the speed we were going, it took some little time for the good ship gradually to lose all way, and eventually stop with studding-sails set low and aloft.

All sail was furled; boats were hoisted out; and we prepared to land on a small island

about a mile and a half distant. A boat was sent ashore, and discovered a good sandy beach under the high land beyond.

Of course, it was a great relief to feel ourselves safe. There were the boats to fall back on as a last resource; but I doubt if we could have saved all hands without making temporary rafts, and then, of course, provisions and water had to be considered.

Within a short space of time a French paddle sloop came as near us as she could; and, after communicating, our first Lieutenant was sent away in her to Hong-Kong, to take despatches to the Senior Admiral and Commander-in-Chief, Sir Michael Seymour, and report the sad disaster.

There was a question of landing all hands at once; but as long as we did not sink in the mud and the sea remained smooth, there was no immediate cause for anxiety. We sent sails ashore, improvised tents, and landed provisions and a guard of marines.

Pirates infested the neighbourhood. Every trading-junk was more or less a pirate if he got the chance. All that evening there was little to be done beyond collecting our goods and chattels and placing them for safety in the main deck. The after part of the lower deck was still dry up to eight or nine o'clock; so that the officers were enabled to get to their cabins to remove their clothes.

Later she settled still deeper in the mud; and before we had lain down to catch some sleep on the main deck, the water was all over the lower deck, and up to the beams farther forward.

At 5 A.M. the ship appeared to have suddenly settled down very considerably. We were called up to man the boats, and to land in case of further accident. It was still dark, and this business was somewhat difficult. The Frenchmen sent boats soon after daylight, and helped us all that day to get stores and provisions ashore; but it was well past midday before I got anything to eat, as we had not expected to have to forsake the ship so suddenly.

As has been said, the only spot where we could encamp was on this sandy beach. Now, the first night of our landing deluges of rain began. They lasted three or four days, and the hills sent down such volumes of water that we lost a good many of our effects, which became buried in the sand. We had three or four brass howitzers in position in front of the camp, and these had to be dug out of the sand—one had been completely lost to view.

Most of our officers lost all they had saved from the ship, and what was left on board was well under water by this time.

The ship had sunk gradually into the mud, and at high water the upper deck was well covered.

The Commodore would not leave the ship. He was much distressed, and spent most of his days on the bridge under a temporary covering, with a guard of marines as his protection.

He always had the idea that his frigate could be floated; but not so others, who felt sure that the game was up and the vessel doomed to be a wreck.

As soon as lighters and help came from Hong-Kong we set to work to hoist guns out and get every mortal thing out of the ship we could; but mud had settled so much in the ship (owing to the tides) that work was very slow and much against the divers.

More important duties now called us elsewhere. John Chinaman had to be settled with. War had begun, and a strong naval force was to ascend the Canton River. Accordingly, all our officers and men were dispersed into different vessels forming the Squadron then in China.

Keppel was given second in command of the Fleet, and made senior officer up the river. He flew his flag in the *Hong-Kong*, a river steamer that had been improvised for the war. She was useful, being of fair speed and very light draught. Her armament consisted of a long 32-pounder; and a few brass guns were put into her, besides several rocket tubes, splendid weapons to smash into mandarin junks and bamboo stockades which we should have to deal with up the river.

I have by me a letter written by Henry Keppel to Sir Baldwin Walker, then at the Admiralty. After describing the circumstances that led to the grounding of the *Raleigh*, he writes :—

> I cannot bear the idea of leaving the ship, and will not do so while there is any hope. The Admiral has given us the *Alligator* to live in, and we are happy and jolly together, and the idea of our being dispersed distresses all hands more than the loss of our beautiful frigate. I should prefer the command of a junk to being sent home. . . . You will feel, my dear Walker, this sad blow, this finish to my career as a captain. If, however, the ship is not got up—and I will bet my quarterly bill she is (though I have lost my little all)—I may still be of some use. We ought all to be truly thankful.

This shows the distress of mind poor Keppel was in ; yet he thought his vessel might still be saved. I believe later that they tried to raise her by lashing junks alongside. That having failed, she was put up for sale ; but, as only the value of her copper was offered, this also came to nothing. When I last saw her, some three weeks after the stranding, the sea used to break over the bulwarks in the fore end. The three lower masts were still standing and the pennant still fastened to the main mast ; but beyond that she was a complete wreck. I never heard what became of her afterwards.

CHAPTER XIII

AT WAR IN CHINA

After ten days or so of hard work and exposure on this desert island, I was sent to the *Nankin*, a 50-gun frigate, and took passage in her to Hong-Kong, to await events.

Commodore Elliot was hard at the Chinese junks up the Canton River, when Keppel took his place. As luck would have it, my dear Chief took me with him; also Prince Victor of Hohenlohe, Goodenough, Charlie Scott, and Harry Stephenson. Goodenough had command of the improvised gun-boat, the *Hong-Kong*. Having little or no kit left, I managed to get a small fit-out at Hong-Kong before joining. Very little sufficed for that rough work up the river. I had lost nearly all my clothes. What became of my sea chest I don't know (nor my poor fiddle I was so fond of). I expect it was left on the desert island, with what little there was in it. Sea chest! What a ghastly thing it was! You were supposed to wash in it.

Fancy your stock of white shirts being slopped over, as well as your uniform, every time you went to your chest to wash your hands. A certain part of a cockpit could easily have been arranged with drawers for middies' clothes, and there might have been a decent place to bathe in.

We started up the Canton River for the front on the 20th of May, and joined the Fleet of brigs, gun-boats, and small corvettes at the rendezvous off the Bogue forts, fortified islands some distance up the river—I should imagine half-way to Canton. Some of these brigs were lovely little ships. A 16-gun brig under all sail was one of the prettiest sights imaginable. I particularly remember a little beauty called the *Acorn*.

The old *Alligator* was towed up and turned into a depot flagship. She was an old 26-gun frigate, as broad as she was long; and, short as I was, I had to stoop in going along the main deck, lest I should strike against the overhead beams.

When we were not fighting, or on some expedition, this old frigate served as our flagship; and, though cramped, we were certainly much cooler and better provided for. Towards the end of May the plan for the attack on the Chinese war-junks was completed. Gun-boats were told off to lead divisions of boats and take them in tow. Our larger boats, launches, and barges carried brass

guns in the bows ; cutters were armed with rockets, besides rifles and cutlasses.

The rockets John Chinaman particularly dreaded : they upset his nervous system. I wrote home at this time, saying :—

We hate these Chinese ; it takes twenty of them to equal one Englishman, and they are awful cowards. They carry what they call stink-pots at the mast-heads of their junks, so that when our boats get alongside to board them, these pots are lowered into our boats, explode or break as the case may be, causing such a frightful stench that you are suffocated by the disgusting smell, but if they will only hold on and not bolt when we get among them we shall pay them off properly. But they say these chaps cannot stand close quarters.

What a novelty to me was China—people, customs, costumes, and eccentricity of the women ! I am afraid we treated China very badly. I remember landing at low water on one occasion at Hong-Kong in company with several other officers. We had to be carried ashore through the soft mud on the boatmen's backs. We were all in nice clean white clothes. To our horror, on landing we found ourselves besmeared with cocoa-nut oil. The boatmen had rubbed oil all over their naked hides, to keep the flies and other insects off. We were a dirty sight ; and retaliated by thrashing the poor wretches with our sticks and umbrellas. They bore our abuse without a murmur.

On the 30th of May, the attacking force was pushed up the river to a point where various creeks debouched from the main stream. Up one of these creeks we were to fight our battle of Fatshan on the 1st of June. The boats were all towed up by the gun-boats, presenting a very long string: they were an imposing sight. The *Hong-Kong*, on which vessel I was serving, flew Commodore Keppel's broad pennant. We had a good reconnoitre of the Chinese war-junks on the 31st, while the finishing touches were being made among our gun-boats and attacking forces.

At sunset we returned to the flotilla, and the last orders for the morrow's fight were given out. We anticipated a hard tussle. We were right. The Chinese had placed stakes in the river at certain ranges, which we must pass, and all their guns were beautifully laid for those marks.

There was a fort also on a commanding hill on our left front, which must be taken before the boats could advance to capture the junks; and this was to be the first operation.

After supper on the night of the 31st we all lay down in our boats, or on the decks of the gun-boats, to get some sleep. The gun-boats were anchored, with boats all lying in single file astern. It was a lovely calm night, and pretty hot; and beyond the noise of frogs on the banks, and a few night birds parading about, there was little sound

to be heard. We did ourselves as well as we could: some snoozing; others smoking, spinning yarns, discussing eventualities; and no doubt many minds with their thoughts far away. Those who have gone through the eve of an action know too well the many things that run in the mind. Those who have not I wish well through it when their time comes; and to all who may happen to read these pages, luck.

Soon after 3.30 A.M., and before daylight had dawned, the boats were ordered to be manned; the landing-party told off to assault the fort were sent on ahead; the rest of the forces followed slowly, with orders to move on when the fort was carried.

Just at break of day the landing-party were ashore and rushing the hill at the point of the bayonet, while the leading gun-boats pitched shot and shell into the fort, to cover the assault. It did not take long. The Chinamen fired a few shots; but, being overwhelmed by the fire of the gun-boats, and seeing the gallant marines close at hand, they bolted like rabbits. On went the flotilla, until one by one they grounded. The *Hong-Kong*, luckily, drew a foot or so less of water. We were highly favoured thereby, and got to pretty close quarters with the junks. As each gun-boat grounded, the tide being at low water, the boats pushed ahead and came in for a real good

dressing, it being now broad daylight and the sun rising.

Presently the *Hong-Kong* stuck, and a battery, which was masked by trees and sheds, opened fire on our right flank, and caused us much annoyance. Owing to there being many trees about, they could not see our hull properly; but they made several holes in our funnel and paddle-boxes.

Soon the tide began to rise. One by one we all floated and scraped on, as the depth of water permitted, in order to cover our boats, which were now in the thick of it. Keppel led them in his 6-oared galley.

The fire was very heavy: it has always been a marvel to me that we did not lose more men, for the shot were ricochetting down the river as thick as hail, from junks moored across the creek in two lines at intervals. Some of these junks had eight or ten guns on board, and many of them 32-pounders, besides endless jingalls. They certainly looked very formidable, and were decidedly picturesque, being painted in various colours (generally red and green) and flying streamers and flags on all their masts. When we reached a distance of 300 yards or so of the boats, we began firing over their heads; and then, some of the other gun-boats having come up, we gave the junks goss!

Beyond helping to direct the firing, I had little

to do, and was all this time merely a spectator on the deck of the *Hong-Kong:* so I had the satisfaction of seeing the whole business well.

Presently we grounded again. I now saw that at a distance of about 300 yards our boats had taken the first line of junks, and were setting on fire those which had not begun to move off; and these very soon began to blow up, the explosion being dangerous, as spars and timber were falling about in all directions. Having passed through the first line of junks, our boats came under fire of a second fleet, and our poor chaps were suffering severely. Whole sides of oars were shot away; many boats came to grief, and some were sunk; each crew had to take refuge in the nearest boat.

Keppel's galley was at this time sunk, and five of his crew of six men were killed or wounded. He got on board a boat belonging to the *Calcutta*, and, finding his force gradually diminishing, was compelled to beat a retreat for the time being, and rally with what was left round the *Hong-Kong*, the nearest *point d'appui*. Noticing our retrograde movement, John Chinaman doubled his efforts, and the shot came thicker than ever. We were hulled twelve times in a short space—in fact, were being well raked. There was nothing now to do but to await reinforcements. The deeper-draught gun-boats, with their boats in tow, were coming up to join us.

About this time—I should think 11.30—an unfortunate marine had both his legs taken off by a round shot; and my (white) ducks, face, and body were splashed with the poor chap's blood. Looking over the side about this time, I noticed a launch close alongside. I actually saw the whole of one side of her oars cut away, and at the same instant two men killed on the after-thwart, one poor chap's skull killing the man on the thwart alongside of him.

Lieutenant Graham had a round shot between the calves of his legs, contusing them; but he managed to hang on to his work.

The men were fearfully done up. Keppel gave the order to serve out quinine and biscuits during the time we were rallying; but I do not think a dozen men had time to swallow this frugal meal before Keppel, who was at this moment on top of our paddle-box, suddenly called out, "The beggars are making off. Man the boats! man the boats!" and, shaking his fist at them, further exclaimed, "You rascals! I'll pay you off for this!" What a rush! Fresh boats had come up; a frantic cheer was given; and oh they raced exactly like boats at a regatta, indiscriminately, straight at the junks, which now slackened their fire and appeared to be getting into position with their oars to make away. Now there was no quarter. Junk after junk was taken. Some ran

on the banks and were fired immediately: Chinamen jumping overboard in all directions, and swimming for their lives. Some five or so, I believe, got away. The rest were chased for six miles up the river, towards the town of Fatshan; but our chaps were done, and, as Fatshan was fortified and full of troops, we could do no more. So ended a thundering good fight.

The *Hong-Kong* went up some distance beyond the junks that had been captured in the morning, to cover the boats; but, owing to the shoaling of the water, our progress was slow. We were scraping the mud most of the time.

When the boats returned it was about 3.30 P.M.: so we had been hard at it for twelve hours. As I said before, it was simply marvellous that our casualties were so slight. Between seventy and eighty, I believe, was our butcher's bill. I fancy that, as the boats and gun-boats were all bows-on most of the time, it must be considered that we offered small targets. Otherwise the smallness of our loss is unaccountable.

I may be allowed, perhaps, to copy a letter from the Commodore that appeared in *The Times* soon after the news got to England. It will naturally be a description better than my account. It was written on 20th of July, three weeks after the action, from on board the *Alligator*.—

The three weeks of this month have been full of excitement. We commenced on the 1st with as pretty a boat action as any ever recorded in naval history, though it may never be appreciated because it was fought in China. The troops are now unfortunately required for India, and, I suppose, we shall not get them before summer is over. [This is in allusion to the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny.] So much the better for them, as it is boiling hot here now. In the meantime we have to keep the Canton River open for them, it being the high road to the Celestial City, which I suppose they will have to occupy before Lord Elgin attempts to bring Commissioner Yeh to terms. I am left here in command of the river, the fort of Chuenpee, which I took possession of on the 18th, being my boundary at one end, and the Macao fort at the other. They are about forty miles apart. All the intermediate forts have been demolished, and on the 1st we polished off the remainder of their war fleet, about 180 Imperial war-junks, so that now I have uncontrolled possession. Our worthy chief, a fine fellow he is, remains with his flagship at Hong-Kong, paying us occasional visits in one of the small steamers. I have seventeen ships manned by about 2600 men, stationed at different distances, and this being the anniversary of Her Majesty's accession, they are dressed out with bunting, and at noon Commissioner Yeh will be edified by royal salutes fired the whole length of the river from Canton to below the Bogue forts.

My poor *Raleigh* no longer belongs to Her Majesty's Navy, and the Admiral has appointed all the officers and myself to the *Alligator*, with three tenders to do our work. I live in the *Hong-Kong*, but come here to sleep when not moving about, this old hulk being a sort of fixture.

The battle of Fatshan, showing the sinking of Commodore The Honourable Henry Kepple's galley, 1st June 1857.

We all mess together, viz., Lieutenant Goodenough, Dr. Crawford, Prince Victor, Autey, my secretary, Lord Charles Scott, Montagu, and Stephenson. We are very happy and jolly, and this temporary arrangement is a very good one. We thought we were going to have a little fight the other day. The Admiral ordered me to take the Chuenpee fort; we moved down in good order, but the enemy guessed what they might expect, and very wisely "hooked it." I am afraid this is the last little affair that is likely to take place this summer. The upper part of the river is not considered so healthy as the rest, so I have the ships relieved every fortnight. There are two islands near where we are anchored, where the officers and men assemble every evening and play at quoits and all sorts of games. Turnour is up at the front; they are obliged to be continually on the alert to look out for fire rafts and all sorts of infernal machines. I generally visit them once a week in Hong-Kong. I hope somebody gave you a good account of our boat fight on the 1st June. It must have been a beautiful sight to those who viewed it from the heights. The shallow water obliged the *Hong-Kong* to ground, or she would have been in front of everything, but when she grounded I led on my boats in my gig, but as the tide was rising the *Hong-Kong* followed on as fast as she could.

The first division of the Chinese Fleet were simultaneously attacked by about 1900 men. Spread over a large surface they soon gave way, but I did not take up more than a quarter of that number to attack the second division, which was three miles higher up the river, in a well-situated place, and evidently the *élite* of their fleet. They numbered exactly twenty in one compact row, they mounted from 10 to 12 guns each, two in bow and stern

being heavy 32-pounders. I saw I had all the *Raleigh* boats well up, and I determined to push on. They fired occasional shots as if to ascertain our exact distance, but did not open their heaviest fire until we got to 600 yards' distance, and then I saw how impossible it would be to force our way until I had reinforcements. Nearly the first fellow who had his head knocked off was an amateur, Major Kearney. I had known him many years. We cheered and I tried to get on, when a shot struck my boat right amidships, cut one man in two and took off the arm of another. Prince Victor, who was with me, jumped forward to tie up his arm with his neckcloth. While he was doing so another round shot passed through both sides of the boat, wounding two others on its passage. The boat was now filling with water and I got on one of the seats to keep my legs out of the water, and just after stepping up a third shot went through both sides of the boat not more than an inch below the seat on which I was then standing. Many of our boats now got huddled together, the oars of most being shot away. A boat of the *Calcutta* being nearest, I jumped into her, pulling our wounded men with us, my dog Mike refusing to leave the dead body of the man who was his favourite. We were obliged to leave him. I then gave the order to retire on the *Hong-Kong* and reform abreast of her. While we were going down a shot cut away all the oars on one side. I called to Lieutenant Graham to get his boat ready, as I would hoist my broad pennant and lead the next attack in his boat. I had no sooner spoken to him than a shot disabled his boat, wounding him and killing and wounding four others. I saw Graham one mass of blood, but it was from a marine who stood next to him, and part of whose skull was forced three inches

into another man's shoulder. When I reached the *Hong-Kong* the whole of the enemy's fire seemed centred on her. She was hulled twelve times in a few minutes, her deck was covered with the wounded who had been brought on board from the boats. I was looking at him when a round shot cut down a marine and he fell on them. From the paddle box I saw that our heavy firing was bringing up strong reinforcements. The account of having been obliged to retire had reached them, and they were pulling like mad. The *Hong-Kong* had floated and grounded again. I ordered a bit of blue bunting to be got ready to represent my broad pennant. I called out, "Let us try the row boats once more, boys,"[1] and went over the side into the *Raleigh* cutter, in which was Turnour and the faithful Spurier[2] bringing the bit of blue bunting. At this moment there arose from the boats, as if every man took it up at the same instant, one of those British cheers so full of meaning, that I knew at once it was all up with John Chinaman. They might sink thirty boats, but there were thirty others who would go ahead all the faster. On we went. It was indeed a lovely and exciting sight. I saw the move among the junks; they were breaking ground and moving off, the outermost first. This manœuvre they performed in beautiful order. They never ceased to fire. Three more cheers and then commenced an exciting chase for seven miles. As our shot told on them they ran ashore and their crews forsook them. Seventeen were come up

[1] What he did say was, "The rascals are making off." He shook his fist at them, and further said, "I will pay you off for this. Man the boats, boys."

[2] His coxswain.

with this way, and only three escaped. It was in this last chase that my poor Spurier was shot down by my side. I saw his bowels protruding as he lay in the bottom of the boat, holding my hand. He asked me if I thought there was any hope. I could only say—Where there is life there is hope. But I had none. Strange to say, the good Crawford sewed him up, and the Admiral's last letter from Hong-Kong states Spurier hoped to return to his duties in a few days.

We have a surgeon out here who served in the Naval Brigade in the Crimea. He says he never saw such frightful wounds as these Chinese shot appear to make. By the way, I ought to record a delicate attention from the ladies of Macao. My Commodore's broad pennant had been lost when my boat sunk. They presented me with a new silk one, worked with their own fair hands! I hope some day to plant it on the walls of the Celestial City, where the "Braves," as they call themselves, shall respect it.

I will now, in conclusion, give a letter equally gratifying in its way:—

From Rear-Admiral Sir Michael Seymour.

Sir,—I had the satisfaction of communicating yesterday to the squadron generally my high sense of the zeal and gallantry displayed by the officers and men in the decisive action against the Chinese war junks in Fatshan Creek on the 1st inst., but I feel it is further incumbent on me to express personally my admiration of the cool courage and good judgment with which you led the attack, first in the gun-boats until they grounded, and afterwards in the ships' boats up the Fatshan branch, when in the

vicinity of the city of Fatshan the severe struggle with the formidable line of heavy junks moored across the river commenced, and the *Hong-Kong* again aground bore so conspicuous a part. Also your subsequent determined attack with the boats under your command, which finally dislodged the junk forces, and led to the uttermost success of the day.

The fact that your galley was sunk under you, and that five out of six of your crew were killed and wounded, is the best proof that you maintained the post of honour throughout. I sincerely congratulate you on your safety, and shall not fail to bring your services to the notice of the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty.—I have the honour [etc.],

M. SEYMOUR, *Commander-in-Chief.*

The action over, all the killed and wounded were placed on board my ship, and we were ordered to convey them post-haste down to the Naval Hospital at Hong-Kong. We took down eighty killed and wounded; and, as we were but a small river steamer,—considerably smaller than an ordinary tug-boat,—it can be imagined that the poor fellows lay thick on deck and below. Our troubles were not over. A sort of sequel to the fight was going on; and a most unpleasant one it was. As we proceeded, we passed through the junks which we had taken in the morning, now all on fire; explosions were going on in all directions; and (which was almost worse) the guns as they got hot (pointing in every direction) were continually

going off. It was a case of running the gauntlet: how I did watch the muzzles as we passed close by!

Luckily, we were not hit, though our awning caught fire in several places from falling *debris;* and mighty glad was I to find our poor craft clear of all these blazing junks and once more out of harm's way.

I had one very close shave during the fighting. (Probably there were plenty of others, unknown to me.) I was standing on the sponson, helping the wounded up out of the boats, when I heard a devil of a crash close to my head, and, turning round, saw a great bulge and crack in the pantry bulkhead, at the after end of the paddle-box, exactly in a line with my head. I could not resist the temptation to look round, and in at the door, to see what was wrong; and there I beheld an 18-pound shot still pirouetting round on a shelf on which stood some of our crockery, now all more or less smashed. The missile had gone right through our paddle-box from one end to the other. A few more grains of powder or one bulkhead less, and my head would have been unshipped to a moral.

Luckily, John Chinaman was not in those days enlightened in the use of shells. Had he been so, we should probably have lost four times as many men, and we might not have been able to take and destroy the Chinese Fleet as we did; Still, the Chinamen had grape, and filled their

guns with bags of musket balls; and the jingall was an ugly customer, throwing a very large bullet.

Once out of fire, on our way down the river, there was time to reflect. What would we not have given for a good cup of China tea under some of the groves we passed, and for the privilege of being left in peace for a short time? Instead of being at rest, we were tearing along full-speed, leaking like a sieve, owing to the shot holes.

The first thing I did to my outward person was to change my clothes and make an attempt at a wash. I was covered in blood, begrimed with smoke: in fact, filthy. I had a hasty feed on what I could get hold of: to find anything was difficult, with so many poor wounded lying about on the beds in our cabins, on the sofas, everywhere.

The next trouble was our leaks. Where the shot had gone through our sides all was fairly well, as the holes had been plugged up and covered with boarding; but several had stuck in our sides, and the vibration of the engines loosened them, and the leakage was serious. Pumps were kept going; but at one time during the night it was doubtful if we should reach Hong-Kong, as the water was rising to near the stoke-hole fire-pits. We hung on all night, however, and reached Hong-Kong at nine next morning.

The remembrance of that evening and night,

while we were steaming down, is heart-rending. It was dead calm, and the cries of the wounded were unbearable. Many were calling for their relations and friends; others would rise up in their beds, and then throw themselves down in despair. Several times I went on to the sponson to have their piteous cries drowned in the noise of the paddle wheels.

Poor fellows, who had been scorched terribly from explosions of boats' magazines, were enveloped in wadding. Some of them sank during the night from exhaustion: though covered in wadding from head to foot, they found no respite from their agonies. There was a nice young fellow, a mate of the *Tribune*, who had a grape shot through his lungs. It was touching to hear him talking to his coxswain, who knelt by his side, fanning him the while. The chief subject of his conversation was his poor mother. He also sank during the early hours of morning. When daylight broke our decks presented a sorry sight. It was painful to have renewed the scenes of suffering which the darkness had mitigated. Some were soon to die; others were in great pain; but generally all now seemed more still, and, except for the noise of the paddle wheels, a sort of silence came over us as day dawned: the weary were more at rest. I shall never forget that night. I snatched an hour or two's sleep; but one and all of us did

what we could to help the surgeons, and it was a relief when the dead bodies and the wounded were taken out alongside the hospital ship and our decks were washed down.

We repaired our shot holes, coaled, and, as soon as possible, returned to the front that same evening. Next day we took up officers from the ships to see the scene of the fight of the 1st of June. Some Chinamen were already trying to raise their guns sunken in the junks; but a few shots sent them flying. We found we had smashed them up terribly. It was interesting to seek out details of where we had been only three days before, and of what we had done in certain localities; also to note how the Chinese had placed their stakes, many of which were shot away—only the stumps left.

Again, how extraordinary it was that we had not lost more men! An action like this—(I verily believe that during the twelve hours it lasted it could not have been hotter)—is a pretty good test of British pluck. I can conscientiously say that I did not see the slightest hesitation in any man from beginning to end. Even when the boats were fairly beaten off, and Keppel had to retire for reinforcements, there was no hurry while retiring. The men paddled back at leisure, and took their licking calmly.

On one occasion there was rather a rush on

board to quench thirsts; but that was only natural.

The *Hong-Kong* was a large target; but our interest was so much centred on firing good shots, and in watching the boats amid the smoke ahead of us, that, while the firing was hottest, we all felt quite excited, and redoubled our efforts. I enjoyed planting the rockets into them: you can make excellent practice when your craft is still.

CHAPTER XIV

MORE PIRATE HUNTING

AFTER Fatshan actual war operations were more or less over; but we had a deal of pirate hunting. All the trading-junks were more or less pirates if occasion offered: the whole country was demoralised.

One day, lying at anchor in the *Hong-Kong*, we saw on the other side of the river, two or three miles away, a piratical junk chasing two others laden with salt. In less than no time Keppel ordered me to man a cutter of twelve men and go after him. The pirate did not show fight when I got near. He ran his craft on to a mud bank; the whole crew bolted up through a paddy field, and sat down, unconcerned, on a low hill, watching me trying to set fire to the junk. We had pot shots at them; but I could not get the junk to catch fire. To climb on board was impossible (the mud was soft, and had we tried we should have gone over our necks: the tide was falling fast):

so the only thing I could do was to smash in the side under water with axes. We set him on fire next day.

On another occasion the *Hong-Kong* was despatched up one of the many rivers that run into the Canton main stream, in search of piratical junks and "fast boats," which were supposed to be marauding some little distance inland. Boats of the *Esk* also were sent to cut them off up another creek, in case of our missing them. Fast boats were beautiful models, generally propelled by six-and-twenty oars, and armed with jingalls on swivels: they could command all-round fire.

We started early, but saw nothing until about two o'clock in the afternoon, when we discovered three of the fast boats, which, I imagine, had caught sight of our funnel. As we rounded a bend in the river we saw them pulling for all they were worth to escape from us. Going at full speed, we gained somewhat, and got nicely within long-gun range; but unfortunately took the ground, the tide being low, and stuck in the soft mud. Nothing daunted, Goodenough manned and armed the only two small boats we had; taking command of one himself, and giving me charge of the other. Our boats held ten men, besides us two officers. His boat was a wretched 4-oared gig; mine a "sandpan" (shaped like a canoe), which we had

bagged from a junk on some previous occasion; it was propelled by six paddles, and I was steering with a paddle. I could beat the 4-oar, if only I could keep my boat's head straight; but herein a difficulty lay, for I was firing my muzzle-loading Minié rifle as hard as I could all the while when within range. I fancy the fast boats' crews were hesitating as to whether they would await our approach and show fight, because, to our delight, we found ourselves gaining a trifle: perhaps they were getting a bit done up after the *Hong-Kong* chase. Be that as it may, we gradually wore them down; and, when within 300 yards or so, they suddenly put their boats' noses to the bank, forsook their crafts, and bolted into the paddy fields.

We had had enough of it, having pulled a long distance; and we sate ourselves down when we came up with our capture, got into shade, and filled our pipes, hoping that the *Hong-Kong* would rejoin us shortly.

A little distance away on our right front was a small wood. To our astonishment, soon we saw the mast and sail of a huge junk coming slowly along, opening out to view after passing the trees. She was sailing down another creek, which ran into ours about 500 yards farther on.

"Man the boats!" shouted Goodenough. When she showed her hull round the corner

Goodenough said to me, "Montagu, do you think we can take her?"

I hesitated to answer. I thought it would be hopelessly mad to make the attempt. If two or three were wounded in either boat, we should be done.

Seeing that I made no answer, he said, "Well, what do you say?"

I answered: "Sir, if you lose a man or two, or I do before we board her, we shall be utterly helpless; but I am game, sir, whichever you decide."

This sufficed for Goodenough, as plucky a man as ever breathed. He said, quickly, "Oh yes: we will try."

"Oh," said I to myself, trying to look and feel as bold as a lion, "it's UP this time."

But, once we were off, somehow the excitement and the steering and the firing of the Minié rifle kept the devil out of one's mind. The wretched junk—filled with men, crowds on her deck (into which I was potting as fast as I could load and fire)—kept the even tenor of her way, though she soon began to fire round shot and jingalls at us. They fell pretty thick, though most went over our heads.

She was not sailing fast. At first, consequently, we gained on her, as there was little breeze. On we went pulling, Goodenough and I firing until

we got about 350 yards from her—and were still gaining. Bullets struck our boats; but not a man was touched. Luckily, the big shot missed us every time. How I watched the muzzle of his two 32-pounders! What difficulty I had to keep my boat straight! The least mistake in steering, and she was off at right angles.

This went on for a quarter of an hour or more; the junk still sailing slowly away, we pulling our hearts out, when the breeze freshened suddenly, in a sort of puff on the water. The junk began to heel, and soon she showed a bow wave. Then we knew we were done; and perhaps it was well, for nothing could persuade me that ten men and two officers could take a junk with sixty men on board if they showed the semblance of a fight—for the simple reason that nobody could have fired from our boats, and in a running fight we should have been shot in the back as we were pulling alongside.

The only chance of our capturing her was that the beggars might jump overboard from funk. I for one—and I am not ashamed to own it—was heartily glad we got no nearer. I suppose, however, that I should have acted as Goodenough acted had I been in his position.

This same junk was captured next day by the *Esk's* boom-boat, armed with brass guns and a force of at least fifty men. They lost twelve killed

and wounded. How we should have fared without a gun, without a rocket, and with nothing but two Minié rifles firing at intervals, I don't know.

We dropped a few poor beggars: it was not easy to miss when firing into a crowd at 350 yards. I do not think I got more than a dozen rounds into them: steering with a paddle and loading a muzzle loader is not an easy combination of duties.

The only thing which this running fight showed us was that the John Chinaman of 1857 was made of ghastly stuff. He simply bolted.

After lying on our oars, we turned back to pick up our "fast boats," two of which, to our dismay, had got clean off; we found the third—a beautiful boat; but how she stank! We took her in tow, and went down to meet the *Hong-Kong*, now approaching us with the rising tide; and rattling good cheer they gave us on our return, as they could see from the paddle-boxes a bit of what had gone on, by looking over the land; and much distressed they were that they had been unable to help us.

We had other goes at the pirates; but on no occasion was there much show of fight. The work was harassing, and the constant expeditions were tedious, the heat being very severe.

I now come to the month of July 1856, when

I was lucky enough to get the opportunity of seeing further active service, though in a different part of the world.

The operations upon the Canton River had now come to an end. The enemy's fleet of junks was destroyed, and the fortified posts had been demolished. Certainly the town of Canton had to be taken; but that business required troops, and troops were not yet available. Amid these circumstances, the Commodore thought it advisable to ask the Admiral to appoint us mids to one of the ships of the squadron now forming for a cruise up the north coast of China. This was done; and after a few days' leave at Hong-Kong, where I was kindly put up by one of the great merchants, Mr. Dent by name, Scott, myself, and Stephenson were appointed to the *Pearl*, a 21-gun corvette commanded by Captain Sotheby.

During my few days ashore at Hong-Kong I had a capital time of it: complete rest in a charming bungalow, with a lovely garden attached: we lived on the fat of the land. I recollect having a regular Chinese dinner with Colonel ——. It was entirely of Chinese dishes, and we fed ourselves with chop-sticks. One dish consisted of bird's-nest soup. I was told that a *bonâ fide* bird's nest of some sort had been cooked, the interior producing a most choice glutinous substance resembling thick stock. A mid is not supposed to have much

conscience: therefore, he is not very particular about his digestion: I found this "plat" very tasty.

I was well into my breakfast one morning at Dent's house when I received an order to join the *Pearl* in the evening. She was to start next day: not on the expedition up the northern coast, but post-haste to Calcutta! She was taking in coal, and we were to pick up some troops at Singapore for conveyance to India.

CHAPTER XV

THE INDIAN MUTINY

THE Mutiny was at its height. Regiments bound to China had been stopped at the Cape or at Singapore, and sent on to India. The *Shannon*, a 51-gun frigate, was told off for duties similar to our own; and we started together next day.

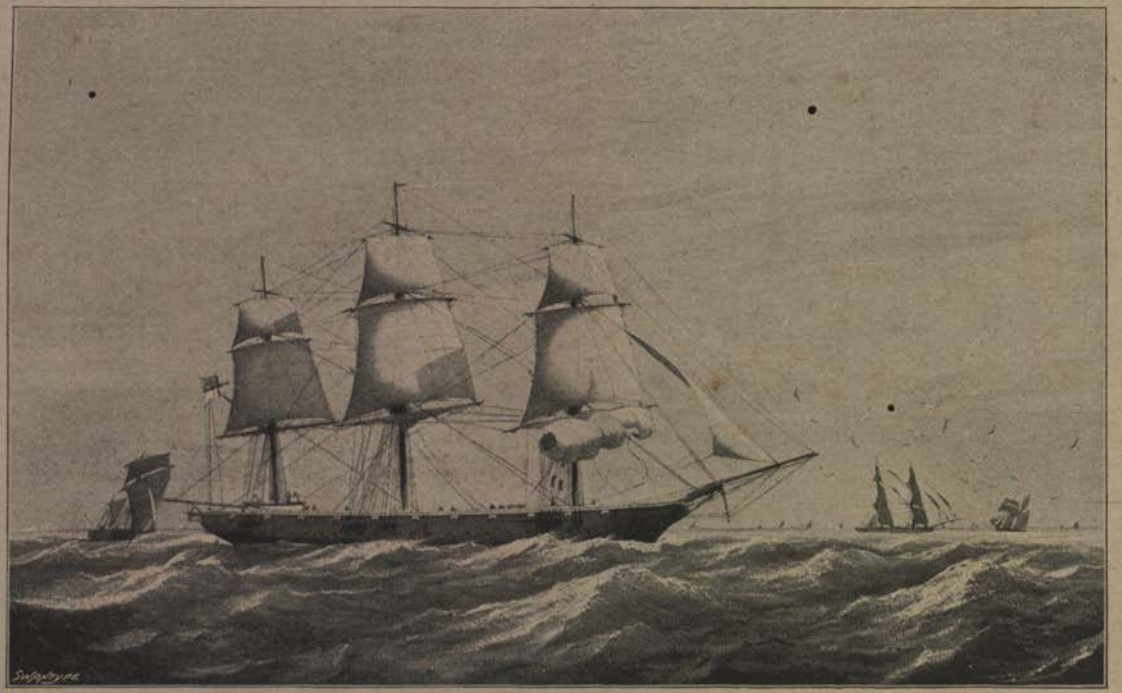
If I recollect aright, I was not very keen on this change of scene. How little a boy foresees! I was, most probably, weary, and sorry not to have a few days more at the charming bungalow. (My letters rather implied this.) Then, I had no idea of what was in store. I thought only of my ship being turned into a trooper to go to Calcutta, little knowing that there was a possibility of a Naval Brigade being landed. In fact, I thought that following my luck in China under Keppel would have been more to the point.

Of the voyage to Singapore, occupying twelve days against the south-west monsoon, I have nothing to relate. We met the *Shannon* going

into the harbour as we approached : so we made a good race of it. Next day was spent in coaling and taking aboard a few troops ; then on we went to Calcutta, making a good passage, averaging our 200 miles a day.

On arriving off the mouth of the Ganges we unfortunately lost four days in searching for a pilot. The weather was very thick, and, as may be imagined, this was very trying to all on board. We arrived at Calcutta on the 12th of August, and moored our vessel to the shore off the Maidan. The *Shannon* got in three days earlier, having picked up her pilot shortly after reaching the mouths. These pilots were very important gentlemen. They were dressed in uniform, and each brought his own leadsman with him. They would not trust to the blue-jacket. The shoals in the river were constantly changing, especially during the rainy season, when great volumes of water came down ; and, I believe, there was a shoal called the James and Mary : if by chance it was touched you would capsize instanter.

What a scene it was on our arrival ! Thousands of people were watching us. We astonished the natives by firing a Royal Salute. I was amused by watching Parsees in their buggies flying, horses taking fright, and the natives generally fancying we were bombarding the city. Sir Colin Campbell, who was still at Calcutta, told Lord Canning we



H.M.S. 'Pearl,' 21-gun corvette.

were as good as the right wing of an army in the position in which we were—so as to cover the town. An outbreak even at Calcutta was daily expected: in fact, the whole place was in a state of turmoil.

Dreadful stories came down-country. The massacre of Cawnpore was in everybody's mind. In fact, these outrages, accompanied by feelings of revenge, were on every white man's lips, and we soon caught the infection.

Within a few days of our arrival, Captain Peel of the *Shannon* formed his Naval Brigade and went up-country. We of the poor *Pearl* felt terribly the order to remain behind. We were wanted at Calcutta. Our two ships there had had a great effect on the natives, and had possibly saved an outbreak in the town, which we could rake with our heavy ordnance.

We placed howitzers in our tops, and for some days kept men aloft on the watch. The Hoogly (as the river is called at Calcutta) was alive with merchant ships—huge East Indiamen, and a considerable number of large American trading ships.

At night the songs were sometimes very entertaining, and what amused me most was listening to their anchor-weighing choruses. There were ships constantly unmooring and weighing their anchors close to us. At every heave of the old-fashioned

windlass they would almost stop for a whole verse, and then go on again and just get in two links. The men generally were a rough-looking lot, and there was plenty of liquor floating about.

The first detachment of our Naval Brigade was formed in September, and in a few days left for up-country. Sotheby was in command, taking all the marines and about 100 blue-jackets and half the combatant officers. I myself was left behind, which was a great trial; but I knew it would not be for long.

Our turn came about the middle of October. The six weeks of my stay I passed pleasantly. The civilians and the Government officials were most hospitable. I was surprised at seeing so many Europeans. My idea of India was the dark man and nothing else.

Lord and Lady Canning were kindness itself. In one of my letters to my parents I describe the dread of going up to write my name down at Government House on being ordered to do so by my Captain: I considered that "a poor mid was not half swell enough for that." I put off what appeared to be the evil day as long as I could: until one morning I got a note from Lord Dunkellin inviting me, by Lady Canning's wishes, to come to tiffin. Though care-worn and anxious, she still preserved her charming looks: the grace and dignity of her bearing struck me, young as I was.

She conversed with me a good deal about common relations and friends at home, and soon won my heart by her very kind ways and charm of manner. His Lordship was just as I remembered him in England, though he was not well, with the weight of cares depressing him.

I was offered ponies to ride, buggies to drive, anything I wanted; and I heard him give the order that I was to have *carte blanche* use of his stables.

Great state was observed in those days. I have seen sixty to seventy attendants, all dressed in very handsome native garb, waiting at dinner; and we dined in a beautiful marble hall, kept cool by innumerable punkahs.

They took me, on one occasion, to the country-seat at Barrackpur; and how I did enjoy the gardens, flowers, fruit! At Calcutta in those days there were two celebrated tiffin restaurants, where we mids consumed English mutton chops, beer, and the celebrated chutnee. One was called "Bodrie's," and was famous in its day. Maybe it is going on now; though, I suppose, there are many more of such places on a much larger scale.

At the end of September orders were sent from the Governor-General that we were to be ready to start, with the remainder of our crew (as many as could possibly be spared), to reinforce Captain Sotheby's detachment, and we were to endeavour

to raise 100 volunteers from the merchant ships lying in the river. So pressed were we for the white man, as long as any one could be found to carry a musket he had to go up-country.

I devoted a good deal of my time to going on board the merchant ships to induce the men to come. Of course, this was hard on the unfortunate captains: it meant their lying there unmanned, and consequently unable to sail away with their cargoes; and many were the altercations I had with the skippers.

Still, I collected 100 men in less than four days, and sent them on board the *Pearl* to be fitted out in clothes, and to be taught the use of the fire-arm. Curiously enough, they turned out some of the best men in the Brigade. To get more, we sent to the jail, thinking that there might be men whose times were about to expire.

To get up-country, we had to be taken by steamer right down the river to the Sunderbunds, and so, *viâ* the main river, to Benares. Our steamer was very comfortable. She towed a flat laden with baggage, ammunition, and so forth. Our remaining brass gun (12-pounder), howitzers, and two brass field-pieces had gone up before. The 12-pounder threw a shot at no greater range than 1200 yards; the range of the howitzers was about 800. Such were the guns that formed our batteries on war service.

Going up-country in this steamer was a matter of great interest to me. Passing through the innumerable creeks in the Sunderbunds at the mouths of the river was most exciting. Every one was shooting at something all day. Sometimes deer appeared, drinking; and no end of birds were shot—not that we ever stopped to pick them up. Tigers we were always on the look-out for, though we never saw one. Farther up, as we came across cultivated land and villages, we gave the Pariah dog no peace. The signalman on the steamer had strict orders to let us know if a dog appeared in sight on the banks. A volley was immediately discharged, and all consequences were ignored. It was war time!

I shall never forget a native galloping along for hours on a road that ran parallel to the river, waving and gesticulating frantically to stop our vessel. The poor man came on board that evening, when we made fast for the night, and told us that his daughter had been shot in a field by a spent bullet. Whether it was true or not (he was much doubted by our native crew) we never knew; but 20 rupees was all he got—and seemingly all he wanted, for he went ashore in great glee.

We were a considerable time steaming up the Ganges, owing to the strength of the current. Every evening we had to make fast for the night, and at daylight we started off again. A good deal

of organising went on daily, and all preparations were made for landing the Royal tar, and turning him into a soldier. What a novelty to us, all trained to the sea as we were, to be suddenly turned into soldiers! Such we were for twenty months, as we remained up-country until the whole neck of the Mutiny was broken and peace restored.

We had our horsed battery and companies of infantry; and it was really astonishing how soon the sailors learned to ride and gallop their horses and guns about, very often like horse artillery.

We picked out the most horsey blue-jackets for our battery: some that had had in their boyhood to deal with horses, or, at any rate, who knew something about them. The men were all armed with the Brown Bess. Rifles were not to be had at Calcutta, and in those days only our marines had been supplied with the Minié rifle. Brown Bess was good only up to 300 yards in reality. Not until the Mutiny was far advanced were we supplied with rifles, and, even then, there were not enough for the whole Brigade.

Our 4-gun battery was, later, increased by two 9-pounder brass guns. These ranged some 1700 yards or more, and that made all the difference in the world to our effectiveness. Often we longed for the rifle instead of the old Brown Bess.

Luckily, the Sepoy mutineers were little better

off. Still, they had better artillery on the whole. Anyhow, they always found our range before we got theirs; though in our part of India very few shells were used by the Sepoys, and that only at the beginning, for they ran shorter and shorter of ammunition as time wore on, and latterly even had often to use bullets made of clay.

We arrived at our destination on the 2nd of November, having left Calcutta on the 12th of October. There were no railways, and thus our journey up-country took an endless time. We landed not many miles above Patna, on the opposite bank of the river; marched four miles inland, and bivouacked in an old schoolhouse for the night. At 4.30 A.M. the reveille was sounded, and we marched on ten miles. Then we remained two days, waiting for baggage, collecting bullocks, hackeries, and elephants; and two days later we joined Sotheby and the first detachment, who were awaiting our arrival before proceeding up-country.

It was a great lark. One of the first things I did was to buy a pony. I got one for £3 : 10s., which was a pound more than the usual price. What a delight to a boy — possessing his pony and syce, and a grass-cutter between two of us! We remained in this encampment for several days. The tents were pitched in a large mango tope, shady and pleasant; the monkeys affording

us much amusement. We set to work, formed our force in fighting order, and drilled like the devil, morning, noon, and night; marched out to practise the men, and got them into the ways of battalion drill: in fact, turned the British tar into a soldier.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NAVAL BRIGADE AT WORK

In describing what I saw of the Mutiny I shall not be able to give a very correct account of the places we went to, more especially as to the names. I must be pardoned for mistakes. It is somewhat curious that I do not retain in my memory many incidents of the campaign that might prove interesting to read. I say curious, because I find I remember matters of much more antiquated dates quite easily in comparison with those which occurred between October 1857 and February 1859, during the time I was up-country in India. Perhaps this is because of the many varied scenes in a life so entirely novel; but there may be a better reason. Between the ages of sixteen and nineteen a boy's mind is constantly on the change. He is growing out of boyhood into manhood; he no longer sees things in a boyish light; yet he has had none of the experience of a man; in fact, his state is one of transformation. Certain things strike a boy's

fancy, and *vice versâ*; and so I give what follows as the reflection of my best remembrance. In looking over my letters, I find a great difference in the account I wrote of passing events during those twenty months ashore.

To enable me to refresh my memory with more correctness of detail, I applied to the blessed Board of Admiralty to allow me the use of the official report of our proceedings in the *Pearl's* Naval Brigade; but this was refused—on what grounds it is difficult to imagine. Either it is the cursed system of red tape that pervades the length and breadth of that building at Whitehall, or possibly some librarian and his associates find the book-ladder too heavy to trouble with; but there live the records of the doings of the *Pearl's* Naval Brigade in India, possibly rotting on some musty shelf, and one who served his country—to whom reference to these books would be of the greatest service—has been denied the privilege of referring to them. I consider that it ought to be deemed a right. The Admiralty has always been (in my days, at any rate) one of the last places on earth to expect assistance from. I am happy to say that I have never been under any obligation to the Admiralty for the slightest help. My promotion was by Order in Council, when the *Pearl's* Brigade were voted the thanks of both Houses of Parliament; and whatever luck I may

have had I owe to no one at the Admiralty, but to chances that might accrue to any officer during his career.

We now arrive at a date about the middle of November 1857. During the rest of that month, and well into December, there is nothing particular to relate. We moved from our camp only to send out a detachment when any news came in of a party of rebels being in the vicinity. There were occasional scrimmages, not worth recording. We were simply stationed there as the Sarun field force to protect a district in the neighbourhood of Sewan. The flower of the Sepoy army were well engaged with Lord Clyde and General Franks in Oude. We ourselves were on the borders of the Gorruckpore district, and, consequently, at that period, had to deal only with the rebels, led by certain Rajahs and without much organisation. From day to day we heard dreadful accounts from up-country. Our forces were barely sufficient for defensive purposes, and things generally looked black.

On the 19th of December Brigadier-General Rowcroft, in command, had under him a force consisting of 260 men of the Naval Brigade, with 14 officers, two small regiments of Ghoorkas mustering about 1150 men, and 50 Sikhs, with the Naval Brigade battery of four guns, all 12-pounder brass guns. General Rowcroft had taken command

of this force about a week before; and, owing to the bad news we received of the rebels collecting from all directions, it was deemed necessary to entrench our camp. We were far too small a force to take the field: so it was decided to wait for reinforcements. It took very little time to throw up earthworks and bastions and to make rifle pits for the outlying pickets; though we had to work night and day to complete the job, as native labour was not to be had for love or money, and camp-followers in India are a lazy lot.

To overawe the natives, we made dummy guns, which with our battery guns were always kept covered up, so as to make the enemy imagine that we had plenty of artillery; but, I take it, they knew just as much about our doings as we ourselves knew. The bazaars (as they were called), a system of market that always sprang up whenever we remained long in one encampment, were hotbeds of the spies and detrimental to the force; but the camp-followers must have them—else had they been minus food.

In India in those days, for every white man you had at least three natives following, either on the line of march or on their own account as appendages to the force. A magistrate accompanied us, and goodness knows how many baboos and native police and other paraphernalia of the law.

When we were fighting, or on the brink of it, at least half of the natives suddenly disappeared, or remained behind in their own districts, and possibly turned rebels, if occasion required it. The whole country was in a state of disorder. Villages were deserted, and cattle grazing about *ad lib.* In fact, it was war with a vengeance and no quarter.

It always struck me that we treated the natives with scant courtesy, and at times very roughly. We looked on them as such inferior beings, and bullied them far too much. I recollect seeing natives beaten and kicked for very little provocation. If a kitmuggar or bearer (servant) were lazy or disobliging, young officers took the law into their own hands, either thrashing him or fining him so many days' wages; and, as a native only got a few pence to pull your punkah all night (to enable you to sleep in comfort), it was poor pay. If by chance he dozed off, the stillness of the air awoke you, and the poor devil was sure to get a hiding for his neglect.

One of the earlier horrid sights I saw was when three Sepoy mutineers were brought into camp to be blown away from a gun. Of course, this sounds barbarous, as the sight is; but the death is no worse than loosing off ten rifles into a man. We used to form our force up into three sides of a square; a gun was loaded with half a

charge of powder; and the rebel was lashed to the muzzle. This was done for effect, in the hope of overawing the natives; but those executed did not seem to mind it, for their souls were supposed to be saved if they were killed by white men: I saw them walk up to the gun as coolly as possible. One could not help admiring the pluck of the wretched creatures.

Alas, we had to do it. Also, in the early days of the Mutiny we had constantly to hang the wretches. Once I was sent away to hang eight rebels on one tree. Shooting them would have been more merciful. I simply marched them off with a small guard of sailors to a tree a mile or so from camp, where they were executed. If by chance captured rebels happened to be natives of any note, we erected temporary gallows and left them hanging for a day or two.

Not many days after we had thrown up our entrenchments, there was a sudden apprehension of a night attack; but it came to nothing. The outlying sentries in one place began firing; the pickets ran in; and we stood to arms. At that time, and for many days, only half the force were allowed to sleep at a time; those asleep kept their belts on, and no one was allowed to go far from camp by day.

Being pent up in entrenchments for days together was weary work. We longed for the enemy to attack us, feeling pretty sure that we

should give a good account of ourselves, and so enable the force to move on, and change quarters.

Christmas Day 1857 passed off quietly. We had our Christmas dinner, such as it was. I think I fared off a tough fowl I had shot a day or two before in the "High Street" of some village. We used to go into villages to buy poultry or kids: if the villagers refused to sell, we shot the fowls and paid the market price.

Our first brush came off on the 26th. Soon after daylight information was brought in by our spies that some four or five thousand rebels with six guns were advancing to the attack. At about ten o'clock some native mounted police brought in word that the enemy was about five miles off on the high road. This we soon discovered for ourselves. Seeing clouds of dust in the distance, we struck camp and formed up half a mile or so to our front, with our poor little force of 1400 men and four guns. I had by this time been appointed Aide-de-Camp to General Rowcroft, and had got hold of a real good nag, besides my pony.

We awaited them some little time. Then, the enemy making no move, the Brigadier ordered a general advance. To our surprise, we found them partially entrenched near a huge tank (pond), and in a large grove of trees, with a battery in position under cover on the high road. Natives always think you must attack them in front. They

cannot imagine that that is about the last place a wise General would choose—particularly if he had the slightest chance of doing double the damage by a change of front or by a flank attack;—and so it happened here. No sooner did we get within long range of their artillery than we changed direction to their right; which seemed to nonplus them completely. Our skirmishers got well up to them, and our guns, pouring in shells, astonished the natives very much. This went on for about two hours. I was sent galloping about, and was highly amused all the while at the novelty of the thing. Our guns made splendid practice. I saw a Rajah knocked clean off his elephant, and all the crowd around him bolting to the rear.

By way of a divertisement, the natives tried to outflank us shortly afterwards; but our shrapnel shell soon stopped that little game. Shortly afterwards about three or four hundred horsemen, looking like business, appeared to be advancing to charge our skirmishers. We had divided our four guns to meet this flank attack, and I saw two shells sent bang into these Sowars just as, apparently, they were collecting to charge. It seemed to paralyse them. They turned and bolted.

Rowcroft now thought his time had come. A general advance was sounded, and we went in straight at their position. This was enough for the natives. They fled. When we got to their

first position we found tents standing, two guns deserted, some grain, and so forth. This was all fired, and we rested the troops for ten minutes. There followed a general chase, in which the natives had much the best of it, chiefly along the high road. If we had had cavalry, we must have inflicted a serious loss. As it was, we followed the main body for six miles, until we came to a small river. They had destroyed the only bridge, and, as the river was not fordable and our men were dead beat, we collected and halted. We took from this river two more guns, which they had spiked and left behind.

This was not a very worthy engagement. The fact is, the natives had no leaders and no organisation in these particular districts. They relied on their numbers to smother our force, to harass our communications, and to make themselves obnoxious.

After the action we bivouacked for the night near the river mentioned, emptied our haversacks, and lay down as best we might in the open, sending back for our baggage, which arrived next day under escort of the small force we had left in camp. The camp was pitched at a place called Mejowlee, a small village a few miles off. Early next morning part of our force was sent away, I accompanying it, to burn a rebel village about three miles from our camp.

On arrival we gave the infirm and the sick an hour to clear out. The villagers generally had bolted before we arrived, or, it was assumed, had formed part of the little army that had attacked us on the 26th. It was rather pitiable to see these people wandering out into the open, some carried on charpoys, others limping along, with all the goods and chattels they could collect in that short hour. I felt sorry for them; but it was a regular "budmarsh" (rebel) village, and its destruction was richly deserved. A very short time sufficed to burn it to the ground; and, I must own, we all tried for a bit of loot before it became a blaze.

CHAPTER XVII

INCIDENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN

FROM this period—the end of December 1857 until the 10th of February 1858—our work consisted in sending out detachments to destroy villages and the houses of rebel Rajahs. On one occasion a Sikh discovered 30,000 rupees (belonging to some Rajah) hidden in the wall of a cow-house. Needless to say, this money was handed over to the Government: much to our dissatisfaction, as we rather anticipated having our respective shares doled out to us. Occasionally our camping-ground was changed, so as to keep in touch with our detachments; but otherwise there was no fighting during these six weeks. Whatever rebels there were about did not collect.

Camp life was at that time pleasant enough. The days were pretty warm; the nights actually cold. We amused ourselves shooting snipe in the ghylls of the near neighbourhood, and very often came across wild pea-fowl in the pea-fields or among

the "growing crops." The difficulty lay in procuring shot. We improvised a system of melting bullets: standing on a chair in our tent, we dropped molten lead through small pierced pieces of tin into a bucket of cold water. The shot were rather elongated; but they answered the purpose in a way (anyhow as slugs), and we bagged many pea-fowl, also a few snipe, and occasionally duck.

Another recreation was to go pig-sticking after the pariah dog with an improvised spear—generally a long nail secured to a cane of bamboo. We sallied out, a party of six or eight, on our ponies, and rode round the outside of a village in quest of a good, strong-looking dog, which we might find basking in the sun; and if it was not found outside the village, we rode down the "High Street" in search. When found, he got a good prick, and immediately started off, yelling. He was given a bit of law, and off we skedaddled after him. Sometimes the dog would take you clean across country to the next village, and once we had a rare run of five miles. These dogs were more or less wild, and the hunt sounds a bit cruel to relate. I fancy our feelings were hard in camp life — especially during the Mutiny days.

The time had now arrived when we were ordered to the banks of the Gogra river to collect boats to enable us to build a bridge for Jung Bahadour's army to cross over into Oude, in order

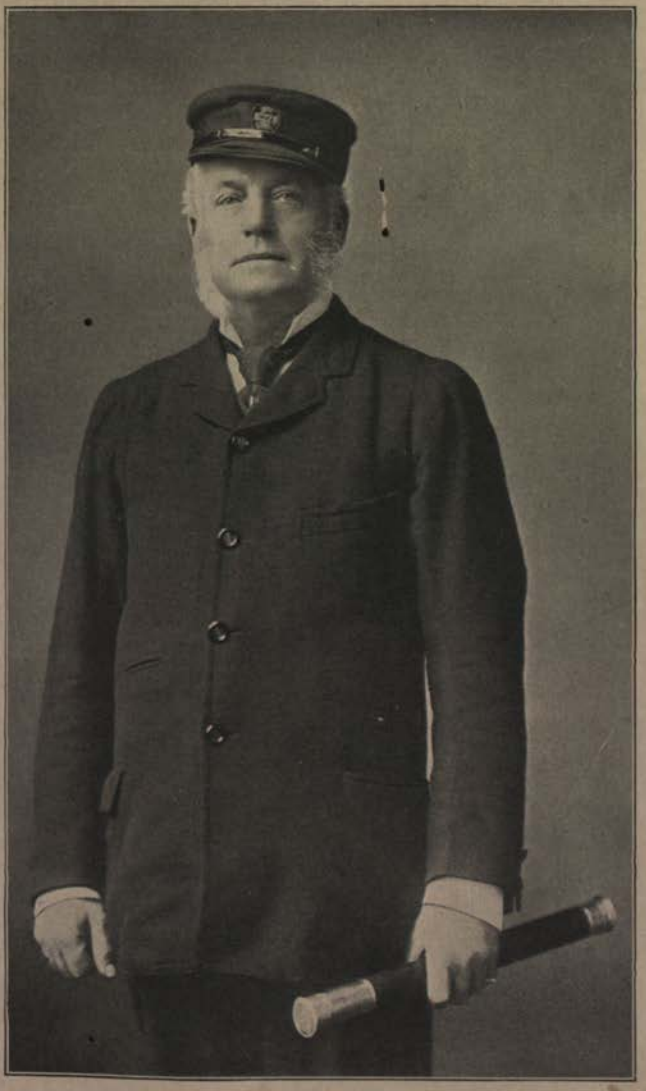
to render assistance to Lord Clyde's army, then before Lucknow. Jung had 10,000 Ghoorkas with him, and about twenty-four guns. Why he could not do his own work himself I never discovered. I conclude that, he being an ally, the authorities thought we ought to do his dirty work. We made four or five marches to the banks of the river, took a small fort on the way, and encamped near the bank. The Sepoys were collecting in force on the opposite side; and Jung used to amuse himself by firing long shots at them across the river, though they were well out of range. These 10,000 troops seemed quite a large army to us. I rode into their camp, and dined with some English officers whom he had attached to his force.

Getting the boats up to build a bridge took some time, and, of course, it was necessary to take possession of the opposite bank—a task which our field force had to undertake. Accordingly, we were marched off down the river to a spot where, with the assistance of a few boats and temporary rafts, and aided by a steamer, we crossed, unknown to the rebels. I fancy they were awaiting us near Fyzabad, little thinking we could cross lower down. Jung and his army remained where they were, with the exception of about 1000 Ghoorkas whom he sent with us, and a few pieces of artillery. To get to this place of crossing, we had to make a forced march of 32

miles. Much fatigued by our long march, we rested until dark, when off we started in silence. Not a pipe was allowed; the wheels of the gun-carriages were muffled; and strict orders were given that no sound should be made.

Crossing the dry bed of a river at night is not an easy matter, and our progress was slow in the extreme. Guns stuck in the sandbanks, and at times the horses came to grief. It was so tedious, and I so done up, that I slipped unconsciously off my pony's back, and was sound asleep on a sandbank for upwards of an hour. When I awoke my Chief had not ridden on half a mile, and, as luck would have it, had never missed me: when I rejoined him he made no remark. At about 9.30 that evening a detailed force was sent on ahead to attack a stockade on a hill near the spot where we were to arrive after crossing the river. This fort, however, was found deserted, and was soon in a blaze.

Once more we bivouacked, and got some rest, though not for long, as at daylight we had to assist in getting our tents and baggage across, which had now arrived on the other bank. This took a considerable part of the morning, and beyond what I had in my holster (the remains of my previous night's feed) I had nothing to eat. About one o'clock that afternoon, the baggage having arrived, and while we were preparing to



Victor A. Montague

pitch our camp for at any rate twenty-four hours' rest, our outlying pickets gave the alarm and we instantly fell in, as about 50 of the enemy's cavalry came down in our direction to reconnoitre.

Our force that day consisted of 260 Naval Brigade, with four guns, 1500 Ghoorkas, with seven guns, and about 60 Sikhs. After assembling, we proceeded to march in the direction of our bridge of boats higher up. A strong force of Sepoys and rebels had now come down to prevent us from getting to our boats, and to cut us off. By 2.30, in a raging hot sun, we had marched through the village of Phoolpore; and our little battle of that name began directly afterwards.

It was the usual scene: first, a good blaze at each other with artillery, skirmishers to the front. Then a general advance, the enemy falling back and taking up a fresh position; there he stood until we came up close, and then he bolted. There were a good many casualties that day, and a tumbril or two of ours were blown up.

I witnessed a rather curious scene at the beginning of the action. Elephants, as usual, dragged our spare ammunition for the guns and men—as bullocks were slow and could not keep up—though directly we came within manœuvring distance the elephants had to be sent to the rear;

and ammunition was placed in hackeries drawn by bullocks. On that day, from accident or otherwise, the ammunition was not changed soon enough, for a long shot from the rebel battery came bounding among some of the elephants. It was the work of an instant. Up went their trunks, off their trumpets, and away they fled as hard as they could to the rear. It was an absurd sight. Nothing on earth could stop them: a mahout told me he could hardly keep his seat.

We killed a good many mutineers that afternoon. We chased them till near dark (6 P.M.); and, what with the forced march of the previous day and the night crossing (to say nothing of having been under fire from 2 till 6 P.M.), our force was completely exhausted. Worn out with fatigue and hunger, we were soon sound asleep. I pitied the poor chaps who had to go out on picket after those thirty-six hours of incessant hard work.

Two or three of us that evening, while pitching our tents, suddenly discovered in the dark a white mass lying near our tent pole. We had just got the pole up when one of the party trod on this white mass, which turned out to be an unfortunate wounded Sepoy, his leg broken, either by a shot or by a piece of shell—and two parts dead, though, poor wretch, he could call out for mercy and close his hands in token of salaam. Well, all I can say is, we did what we could for

him, got the surgeon to dress him, and put some of our clean clothes on; the doctor amputated his leg, the only chance of saving his life; but by daylight he was gone. It was a sickening sight amid all the circumstances of the case. He was very grateful, and showered blessings on us as long as he could. Poor fellow: he must have thought, when discovered, that he would have a hard fate. I feel sure that if the case had been the other way up our man would not have escaped at their hands: that was certain. I am afraid we all carried great hatred in our compositions. The sole feeling was to sell one's life dearly, if only one had the chance of getting to close quarters. The way the men fought was simply reckless. I have seen skirmishers go straight at the guns, and bayonet all they could reach — unsupported, and perhaps not six men close together.

One of our blue-jackets and Lord Charlie Scott, I believe, took a gun between them, and there is no doubt that they won the Victoria Cross. Somehow this event was never represented. On another occasion a blue-jacket was seen wrestling with a mutineer. Both had lost their muskets in the scrimmage. Eventually Jack got his man down with a fair back heel. In an instant the nigger had his teeth through Jack's arm, the sailor pummelling away with the other. Then somebody called out, "Stick him with your

bayonet, man!" The sailor had forgotten that he had this still on his belt. Soon it came into use, and all was over for the rebel.

The forcing of the passage of the Gogra, accomplished by our force, enabled the Nepaulese army to cross; and next day they were off on their way to Lucknow. These troops, I suppose, could not be compared with the Ghoorkas of this day: I do not think they had much military system. Their chief weapon was the kookerie (a long-handled, curved-blade knife), which they were supposed to throw with the utmost precision a matter of fifty yards; and it was said that these knives were thrown during a charge before coming to very close quarters. For my part, I do not think I ever saw them used in this way: these warriors preferred their muskets and bayonets. They were adepts, however, at cutting off the head of a bullock with one stroke of the kookerie: I saw this done on more than one occasion.

After Jung Bahadour left us we recrossed the Gogra, and were sent back to defend the Gorruckpore district again: much to our disgust, as we thought there was a chance of our going on to Lucknow.

I forgot to mention that Jung Bahadour held a sort of levee in his camp to all our officers before he started, and, in a short speech, thanked us for helping him across. He was a perfect blaze of

precious stones—diamonds and emeralds as large as a thimble—and must have been worth a mass of money as he stood.

We now came in for some severe fighting, marching, and countermarching, for weeks. The heat was becoming oppressive, with violent winds and dust-storms; and the flies were abominable. I have known a leg of a sheep or a goat half eaten by flies, if by any chance the tent was left deserted for a few hours. The white ants were most obnoxious insects: they would demolish a rug laid on the ground to such an extent that it was utterly useless for any practical purpose afterwards.

On the 3rd of March, having arrived and encamped at a place called Amorrah, our force was augmented by 250 of the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry, a perfect Godsend to us. These were indeed splendid troops. The regiment—which, I believe, was raised at Calcutta—was commanded by one Colonel Chapman. As far as I can recollect, two-thirds of the men at least consisted of those who had lost their little all during the beginning of the Mutiny. Some, indeed,—and these not few—had lost near and dear relations, and, consequently, their only thought was of vengeance for the dastardly atrocities and ruin brought upon them and their poor families. They possessed, for the most part, nothing but what they stood in: they were volunteers, and came only to fight

and to die, if such was to be their fate. They were beautifully horsed and well armed: in fact, a splendid corps. Many of the troopers were gentlemen in social life; all threw in their lot together; and their discipline was superb. If they had a fault, it was recklessness: in their charges nothing deterred them. I forget the actual engagement, and where it was; but, just to see a bit of the fun and what they would do, I followed them, after giving them the order from my Chief to charge a certain position; and at a respectable distance I saw the whole thing. After advancing at a trot, they found that a battery of the rebels was playing into part of our position very warmly. Suddenly they took ground to the right for a short distance, and, under cover of trees, formed up at right angles to the battery. Then they advanced at a canter, and, when within 100 yards or so of the battery, wheeled suddenly to their right and charged straight at the guns in front. As good luck would have it, the rebels fired their grape just too soon, and caught only a few outside files as the squadrons wheeled for the final charge.

It looked to me (200 yards or so away) as if they must have been annihilated; but, thank God, they had lost only seventeen killed and wounded and a few horses. It is needless to say that every gun was taken, and the gunners were sabred to a

man. It was as fine a bit of dash as I ever saw in my life. It came off; but I suppose it was a wild adventure—charging straight up to the face of a battery.

About 2.30 P.M. next day, after our arrival at Amorrah, the force marched out some eight miles to attack the fort of Belwar, not far from Fyzabad, and near the river. We had some scrimmaging in villages before we got to this fort; for about two hours we battered it with our artillery; and the skirmishers were potting away into the embrasures 200 yards distant, waiting the order to assault, if we made a breach. The guns were now moved up to within grape-shot range; but, somehow, we seemed to make no impression on these baked-mud bastions, which had been erected by our own engineers for a Ghoorka Brigade that had been there some time before, and, unfortunately, had not been demolished before they left it. The Brigadier, not liking the task of storming it, as it was nearly dark, ordered the force to retire under cover of the night for two miles.

The fact is, we had got the worst of it. To be candid, they drove us off. Next day the enemy were considerably reinforced: so much so, we had to retire to our encampment at Amorrah and entrench ourselves again. Luckily, we were not molested next day, the 4th; but on the 5th we had the most important fight of the whole

campaign, and there were considerable misgivings as to whether we could remain and fight it out or should have to retire farther. The worst of it was that our retrograde movement from the fort of Belwar had given the rebels additional pluck. They thought they had us.

CHAPTER XVIII

A TOUCH-AND-GO ENGAGEMENT

ALL the 4th of March we were busy strengthening our entrenchments, filling up tumbrils and ammunition hackeries: in short, preparing. Information had arrived that the enemy were going to attack us on the 5th, and would bring a very strong force to the task. Several of the swell rebel Rajahs were to be present. All was in readiness by dark on the evening of the 4th; and at 2 A.M. on the morning of the 5th the alarm was sounded. The force moved out of its entrenchments, and formed up a mile or so to our front. Cavalry on both flanks, guns in centre, and infantry were equally distributed on each side of the battery. There we remained, waiting for news. The cavalry patrol had been sent out five miles along the road, to feel for the enemy.

Daylight appeared; yet no news had been sent in. Not until seven o'clock did we see our patrol retiring at a comfortable trot along the road.

Soon after break of day they had observed this huge mass of the enemy advancing, and had, consequently, retired. We had not to wait long. Clouds of dust told us of their whereabouts. The clouds extended a very considerable distance, overlapping our front on both sides. Not long afterwards we could hear the bugle calls of the enemy; and I must own it was rather an anxious time for us. The Brigadier, alive to the occasion, rode about and spoke a few words of encouragement to the men. How we longed to be all white troops, instead of a mixed force! All told, we mustered only 1700 infantry, 250 cavalry, and four guns. The enemy, we heard afterwards, were 15,000 strong—half Sepoys and half badly-armed rebels—with twelve guns. The next thing to be done was to show as large a front as we could. The regiments were actually placed in single file in one long line. We could not afford supports, and the four guns were divided. In fact, we had to take our chance. Luckily, had to deal with niggers only: or . . . Words fail me.

About 9 A.M. the action was begun by the enemy firing his 18-pounder, then some 1500 yards distant. As we had nothing that ranged more than 1200 yards, we were at a disadvantage. So a general advance was made; our skirmishers were thrown out; and the guns soon got their range. All this time I saw masses of men moving

about in large knots, their object being to outflank us. Their cavalry were galloping about, though they did not seem to have much formation: only clouds of men and clouds of dust were to be seen for miles. This artillery and skirmishers' duel went on for about an hour. Rowcroft calmly waited events: it was for the enemy to show the initiative; we were too weak to manœuvre. Their guns did us little harm (our line was thin); for the most part they fired much too high, clean over our heads.

Our guns pitched their shell beautifully into any large knots they saw; also into their cavalry, which quickly retired in consequence. At eleven or so, the first signs of manœuvring began by the enemy trying to get round our right flank. We changed front slightly; and the right squadron of Bengal Cavalry, to whom I had the pleasure of taking the order, were ordered to advance and charge. They hardly waited for me as I galloped up. They knew before I hailed Major Richardson, now in command, what my bent was, and they were off. Our half battery also advanced at a gallop, the ground being very open (a grassy plain, in fact), and blazed away at the left of the enemy, who soon got the worst of it and were driven back. Noticing this retrograde movement, our centre, which had now been reformed two-deep, advanced, and, gradually getting within close

range, fired, lying down, volley after volley into the disconcerted rebels, whose centre seemed to be on the move.

Meanwhile our left flank was overlapped, and the beggars were trying to get round our left rear into our camp. Off went the left squadron, supported by the other two guns, with our Marines and Sikhs, and mowed them down beautifully. By 1 P.M. the rebels had enough of it, and began to retire in earnest. Our fellows then all along the line took up one continued cheer, and rushed them. This was too much for the enemy, who for a time made off completely. They took up a fresh position some four miles farther on, where there was a village with a large tope of trees; but they did not remain long. We drove them out.

It was now about 2 P.M., and our fellows were clean done up by the great heat. The General ordered a halt. The enemy gradually retired in all directions from our front; and, beyond a few stray shots from their artillery while we were resting in the shade, the fight was virtually over.

I had a good deal of galloping about all that morning. No sooner was I back from one order than off I was sent on some other errand. It was most interesting work. I had constantly to cross some part of the plain where the fire was raging hot. In went my spurs on these occasions. I could generally see the round shot coming.

One of them came ricochetting straight at me. Luckily, I was crossing a bit of ploughed or soft land. The shot actually finished its last bound under my horse's legs without touching them. Once or twice I found some of our native troops hanging back under shelter of old walls, the ruins of some old village. This so annoyed me that, finding strong language of no avail, I used the flat of my sword on more than one man's back. My Chief was very calm all that morning; but I could see very plainly that he was anxious as to results. On my returning from my message he was very impatient to know if the orders were being carried out. He had two other gallopers that day, and they too were hard at it.

We took seven guns: one an 18-pounder, three brass 9-pounders, and others of smaller calibre.

Here it was that a very good messmate of mine, Fowler, was killed by a round shot; not half a minute before he had passed me and said, "I say, old Victor, look at this," showing me where a grape shot had gone through the bottom of his trousers. This was a sad loss to us all. That night I helped to dress him in clean white clothes, and we laid him in his last resting-place. Our casualties were astonishingly few. I attribute this to the thinness of our line and the wretched shooting of the enemy. The hostile force were large enough to eat us had they had any system

of fighting ; but, I suppose, they thought that their great masses would frighten us clean away. The incident showed what method and discipline can do against a mob. Many of the Sepoy regiments had come from Oude. There they had been thoroughly thrashed ; and they fought us that day with their tails between their legs.

The action had a marvellous effect. It saved the Gorruckpore district from a second rebellion. Before attacking, the rebels had issued a proclamation that they had come to annihilate us, to liberate Gorruckpore from the Englishmen, and to drive us out of the district. Our spies told us that they never thought our small force would show front for an instant. It was expected that we should retire, and, consequently, the enemy made no preparations to manœuvre.

We had many narrow squeaks that morning. A shell burst close under the head of the Brigadier's horse ; yet he was not touched. I had hold of the branch of a tree, clearing it from my head, when a round shot cut it off just above me.

After the fight we marched back to camp much fatigued ; but we did not enter our entrenchments. We felt comparatively safe. We knew that the horde of rebels had lost all courage and were in despair. Many gave up fighting and left for their homes. The loss was estimated at 700 killed and wounded.

Next day we had a General Thanksgiving Service for our victory, and very impressive it was.

From the 5th until the 23rd of March we remained at Amorrah and fortified the village. We had one or two alarms that the enemy were coming down upon us; but they were false. A royal salute was fired in honour of the victories at Lucknow, and a parade of the whole force was ordered to hear read out a despatch from the Commander-in-Chief appreciating our services.

We now went into cantonment at Bustee, and huts were built to shelter us from the sun and the rains during the hot season now advancing. Our force was gradually augmented by the arrival of the 13th Light Infantry under the command of Lord Mark Kerr. A splendid regiment it was, over 1300 strong. Later, some Madras cavalry and a Sikh regiment under the celebrated Colonel Brazier arrived; and these cantonments served as our head-quarters until the following November, when we once again took the field. A story was told me of this celebrated Colonel. At the beginning of the Mutiny, it was supposed that the Sikhs were rather wavering in their allegiance, and that his regiment, though most ably commanded, and under perfect discipline, might possibly follow suit. This the Colonel was told. However, one day, while he was writing in his tent, a fanatic rushed in and exclaimed, "Bolt for your life,

Colonel: your regiment is about to mutiny." Brazier thereupon seized his revolver, saying, "If my regiment is to mutiny you shall be the first to suffer for it," and then shot him on the spot. It was said that this summary proceeding stopped a mutiny which was imminent in this regiment—that what the fanatic had told him was quite true.

During the seven months at Bustee we were constantly sending out flying columns, and otherwise giving the rebels no peace when they congregated in the district which we were protecting. Sometimes the fighting was at close quarters for a brief period; but generally the rebels did not stand longer than they could help. It was harassing work, and kept our force employed a good deal.

Cricket matches were got up. Also, we had a theatre, and amused ourselves as best we could, when not out on detachment service, during those long months. The heat was very great, and during the rainy season our men suffered a good deal from fever. I was down with it for six weeks. It took a very malignant mode with me: in fact, it was touch-and-go with me for some days. I lived on quinine and jack fruit.

Towards November the weather became cooler, and preparations were made to leave our cantonments and once again take the field under tents. The change of scene and of work was very welcome.

We left our cantonment on the 16th of Novem-

ber, and advanced in a north-west direction to the frontiers of Nepaul. From that date until the 23rd of December we were gradually driving the rebels before us. There was a smart encounter at a place called Domerigunge, where we drove the rebels across the Rapti River. We crossed a few days after by a bridge of boats. In the action near the Rapti River we got well among them, and in their flight across the river a good many of them were drowned. The Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry paid them off well in a charge, but, unfortunately, lost an able officer, Captain Giffard, who fell at the head of his troop. Once over the Rapti, we heard that the rebels had made preparations for a great stand at a place called Toolsepore, not far from the Terai Jungle. We were now within sight of the Himalaya Mountains, and the distant scenery was magnificent —a relief after the plains we had been marching through all these months.

We arrived in the vicinity of Toolsepore on the 20th of December, and on the 23rd we had our last fight. It was supposed that to take Toolsepore would be a big business. It was said to be a very strong position. Consequently, a siege train was sent for to batter down the forts. Part of the Naval Brigade had to take charge of the guns, three 18-pounders and some mortars. Our force on the eve of the attack con-

sisted of 2180 infantry, 400 cavalry, 12 field guns, and the siege train. To us, long accustomed to fighting with handfuls of men, this appeared quite an imposing force.

We could see the enemy's position in the distance, and clearly make out large forts and batteries and a very extensive camp. I believe that that was their last dying effort in our part of India. All the other field forces were gradually converging and closing in the rebels, who could now only surrender or retreat into the Terai Jungle and cross the Nepaul frontier; which Jung Bahadour, it was said, would oppose. We were now within touch of Sir Hope Grant's columns; and, two days before the action at Toolsepore, he sent us a wing of the 53rd Regiment, about 580 strong, with two guns of Welch's battery.

In the evening before our fight I rode down to the outlying pickets to have a look-round, and was much interested in watching the Sepoys' pickets and sentries, and the little knots of cavalry patrolling about. Now and then a bullet fired from a distance would fly past me, and, as I was only an amateur, I did not remain long to hear more.

Next morning at nine our little army crossed a small fordable river, the Bulli Rapti. I was galloping about all the morning to the various corps, with messages sent by my Chief. About ten the troops had all got into position, and the

usual advance of an extended line about one-and-a-half mile long, with guns in centre, was begun. The enemy came out from their forts, and formed up in three separate columns. Thus, when we got within range of artillery (about eleven o'clock) we had to manœuvre so as to make three separate attacks on the formations. The action was fought on a vast plain.

Skirmishers were blazing away. In fact, a general action had begun. The Brigadier, seeing that the 13th were rather in rear of their proper position, sent me off a mile gallop with orders to them to advance more quickly. I found the 13th in a broken bad piece of ground intercepted with nullahs. Lord Mark Kerr, marching his regiment in open column of companies, was very much put out by the men not preserving their wheeling distance. In fact, he was having a sort of field day on his own account. On my venturing to repeat the orders he became very wroth. Still, it was amusing to see him riding hatless with a white umbrella over his head (which was his wont), and giving his orders as if he were on a parade-ground instead of on a battle-field.

My message to his Lordship was that he should lose no time in advancing, and should keep his alignment. As we advanced the rebels fell back, and for a time they sheltered themselves in their entrenchments. This being just

what my Chief wanted and expected them to do, cavalry and some infantry were immediately sent round their flank, to attack them in the rear and to cut off their retreat should they bolt. The siege train of heavy guns, drawn by elephants, was now moved up and opened fire on the forts. By 4 P.M. we had carried the fort and the villages. There was a chase until seven o'clock, and the cavalry were very effective during the flight of the natives. It was wonderful how soon the rebels got away. They were marvels at running when once off: nothing but horse artillery and cavalry could come up with them. Many hid themselves away in the high-standing crops, villages, out-houses: in fact, they scattered all over the country.

That night we bivouacked outside the enemy's fort and entrenchments. Just before dusk I rode in to see what they were like. It was certainly a very strong position; but the dirt was so abominable that I could not stay long. They had evidently been there some time: anybody who knew India in the Mutiny days will well understand what I mean. Several of the enemy's guns that day were carried at the point of the bayonet (generally by our skirmishers), and we routed them completely.

Next day the troops rested.

On Christmas Day, as we were well into our dinner, and what might be called enjoying ourselves, Sir Hope Grant rode into camp about 4 P.M. and

ordered us to make a forced march immediately, so as to follow up the rebels, who were trying to escape to the eastwards. What a nuisance we voted this grand soldier, as he stood there with a fine escort of cavalry (Lancers) giving his orders to our General! I heard him say, "Off at once! Dinner or no dinner, we must cut these rebels off." There, on the spot, the bugles were sounded; down came our tents; and what became of our stewed kid and other little delicacies we had taken so much trouble to get hold of I don't know. I was on my horse in no time and sent galloping about with instructions.

Marching until well into the night straight across country (the roads being blocked with mud, owing to heavy rains), we halted, and curled ourselves up as best we could on the ground until daylight. I lay down in a ploughed field that night: no baggage or tents had come up. The soil was soft at first; but I soon made a large form, which became as hard as a brick bat; and I woke up aching all over. For three days we saw neither tents nor baggage. We were simply following up the rebels, who were now making for the great Terai Jungle. Arriving at Intwa on the 28th, we found Sir Hope Grant with a troop of horse artillery, the 9th Lancers, and Hodson's Horse. What joy to see horse artillery and that splendid cavalry! The 9th looked nearly as well as if they

had been at Aldershot; so did the horse artillery; and that splendid regiment, Hodson's Horse, was indeed a sight.

For two or three days our force and Sir Hope's marched in parallel columns. Only once did we come across rebels. That was at the edge of the Terai, where we took them completely by surprise, and actually found their pots on the fire, cooking. This was about the last shot the Brigade saw fired. On the 3rd of January 1859 we had done our share in quelling the Mutiny, and received orders to return to our ship *viâ* Allahabad. All our part of the country was freed from rebels: at any rate, there was no chance of their congregating again.

CHAPTER XIX

COMPLIMENTS TO THE NAVAL BRIGADE

It was a pretty sight when we marched away. All our old comrades cheered us; the Ghoorkas, the Bengal Yeomanry Cavalry, and the 13th Foot, who had been our companions during the greater part of the eighteen months we were landed, followed us out of camp; and the bands played for a goodly distance along the road. Hand-shaking and leave-taking followed, and Brigadier-General Rowcroft made us a most complimentary speech. He was very much cut up (no wonder, considering all we had gone through together); he was proud of his Naval Brigade; and to me personally he was the best of Chiefs, considerate and kind on all occasions—I do not remember his ever having allowed an angry word to pass his lips. I had acted as his Aide-de-Camp the whole time, excepting on one occasion when I was sent with a detachment from Bustee and acted as Aide-de-Camp to Lord Mark Kerr.

Starting from near Intwa on the 4th of January, we marched incessantly (with the exception of one day's halt) to Alahabad. We arrived there on the 15th, so that with the exception of one day's rest (on a Sunday) we had a consecutive ten days' marching; doing 26 miles on one day and 18 on another. What was the reason for this hurry I could never understand. I suppose we were in fine condition, and not hampered with much baggage. We left our tent-stores and ammunition behind, and our guns were left with Sir Hope Grant. Lord Canning, I was pleased to find, was at Alahabad. He kindly allowed me to visit him, and I dined with him one evening during our stay. On the morning of the day of our departure His Excellency caused the following general orders to be read out to the Brigade :—

ALAHABAD, *the 17th January* 1859.

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General cannot allow the officers and men forming the Naval Brigade of Her Majesty's ship *Pearl* to pass through Alahabad on their return to their ship without expressing his acknowledgments of the excellent service they have rendered to the State.

Disembarked on the 12th of September 1857, they have for fifteen months formed a main part of the small force to which the security of the wide district of Gorruckpore, and of the country adjoining it, has been entrusted, and which has held during that time important

advanced posts exposed to constant attack from the strongholds of the rebels.

The duty has been arduous and harassing; but it has been cheerfully and thoroughly performed, and the discipline of the *Pearl's* brigade has been admirable. The *Gazettes* of the 9th and 23rd March, 27th April, 11th May, 22nd June, 6th and 13th July, 13th August, 12th and 19th October, 23rd and 26th November 1858, and 11th January 1859, have shown that when the Gorruckpore field force has been engaged the Brigade has signally distinguished itself.

The Governor-General cordially thanks Captain Sotheby, C.B., and his brave officers and men for the valuable assistance they have given to the army in Bengal, and he is glad to think that they do not quit the scene of their services without the satisfaction of seeing peace restored to the rich districts which they have protected.

R. J. H. BIRCH, *Major General,*
Secretary to the Government of India
with the Governor-General.

After this was read out a ringing cheer was sent up, and renewed again and again; knots of soldiers and civilians standing by joined in the general rejoicings. The bands played us down to our steamer, the *Benares*, and we left shortly afterwards on our way down the river. Here was a pleasant ending to all our work. The Governor-General was right in stating that "we left with the satisfaction of seeing peace restored." It was indeed a proud moment to be told that: a reward

to us to see that accomplished which we had done our best to bring about. I hope I may be excused for writing thus much. We had had very arduous work, fighting with a small force against vastly superior numbers, whatever they were made of. We never knew, especially in the early days of the Mutiny, what a day might bring forth: we might even find our whole force annihilated. We had very scanty information about the rebels, and often our spies were not to be trusted. The whole country was up in arms; villages were forsaken, either for fear of us or because they had joined the rebels; the incessant marching and countermarching, and entrenching our camp after a long day's march in a hot climate, were no joke; and I felt very proud of our force, especially of the Brigade, so well commanded by Captain Sotheby.

The action of Amorra had great effect on the mutineers in that part of India. It broke their spirit: so much so, that they never were able to mass in any large force afterwards, with the exception of that final stand at Toolsepore. The rebels as a rule fought badly; but there were occasions when we were hard put to it — not so much by the actual fighting as by the constant state of unrest into which they put us. Then, there was always the feeling that if retreat had been forced on us we should have nothing to fall back upon: neither position nor reinforcements.

To me, a boy, it was naturally a most exciting and interesting period. Between sixteen and eighteen troubles and work do not seem to weigh heavily.

The Brigade had altogether twenty-six engagements with the rebels. I saw seventeen of them. The others I missed because of severe fever, or because I was left behind on camp guard. On one occasion during my illness, while we were on the line of march at night, our doolie-bearers and the spare horses endeavoured to make a short-cut to avoid the dust of the road on which the column was marching. As bad luck would have it, some rebels swooped down on us and stole several horses. Luckily, my doolie-bearers did not skiddaddle with the rest. A horse which was being led just in front of my doolie was captured; but I escaped, doolie and all. I was so ill that it would not have taken much to kill me.

It took from the 19th of January to the 2nd of February to make the trip back to the ship at Calcutta, where, on our arrival, they gave us a salute. Here we were *fêted* for a few days. Dinners and receptions were given in our honour, and the petty officers and men were entertained at the public expense.

Of my passage home in the *Pearl* there is nothing of much interest to relate. We touched at Madras; and at the Cape, and there I met with the heart-breaking news of my beloved

mother's death. Those who have known the depths of a mother's love will be able to measure the terrible blow that then fell on me. She, the one in the world I longed to see again, to talk over with her the many adventures I had had since last we parted—she was gone.

CHAPTER XX

HOME AGAIN

THE *Pearl* arrived at Spithead early in June, and was immediately paid off. Our Lieutenants were all promoted, and the midshipmen were to have their Lieutenants' commissions when duly qualified after examination. Besides, we received the great honour of being voted the thanks of both Houses of Parliament for our services during the mutiny.

After two months' leave I was appointed to the *Algiers*, then in the Channel Fleet. I had to wait until the following spring to complete my six years as a mid and to attain the age of nineteen.

I now had to set to work and get up my navigation and gunnery, so long neglected, in order to qualify in February.

While I was in the Channel Fleet there was the usual cruising—to Vigo, Lisbon, and so forth;—but we spent most of the winter of 1859 lying in Portland Roads. How dull that service

was to me after years of excitement and constant change!

I pass it over, and come to March 1860, when I went up to be examined for my Lieutenantcy. The first ordeal was a Seamanship examination on board the *Victory*. Three old salts sat on me—two of them brig Commanders, the other a Post Captain. The ball was opened by one of these setting me questions, which I was expected to answer *vivâ voce*. I was to take command of his old brig, to find her alongside the jetty in Portsmouth Harbour, dismantled; to fit her out, get my guns in, and stores, and take her out to Spithead, mooring her at that anchorage; I was to let them know when I was ready to begin the ordeal. In the meantime they left the cabin and disappeared—I suppose in the hope that I should be better able to make out my programme and so save their time. This question was a hot one. I gave myself a clear ten minutes over it. I made some pencil notes to assist me in my answers. These notes I consistently followed, and at the end of my ten minutes' grace I sent a message by the sentry to say that I was ready. It always struck me on such occasions that there was a chuckle of delight dimly visible in your examiner's countenance at the thought that he had got you dead-beat. When all three reappeared smiling and joking I

wondered whether their merriment was levelled at me. For a moment it put my back up, and I felt inclined to sulk. However, "Go on, my boy," put me straight again, and I thought there was a wee bit of solicitude in the tone of the speaker's voice. I went steadily on for some time: until first one began to yawn, another got up and walked about, and the third looked out of a port. Evidently bored, thought I to myself, and my story getting prosy. Reader, I never got to Spithead in my brig. I had stowed my hold so nicely—the peas placed carefully in one corner, the biscuit in another, and the rum properly stowed "bung up" in the spirit room—that the examiners had had quite enough of my capabilities, and (beyond shifting a topsail in a gale of wind and some other such detail) I was asked no more. "That will do, sir," I was told, though for the life of me I could not tell the extent of my knowledge: until the Post Captain, on walking out quietly, whispered into my ear, "You are all right! But say nothing about it.—Sentry, tell them to make a signal for our galleys."

"Thank God," said I to myself; and down below I went to refresh the inner man, my lips parched with thirst.

"Well, old chap," says one, "how did you get on?"

"Pretty well, I think," said I; "but, of course,

I don't know." Soon appeared my sheet of foolscap duly signed, and I was a free man, as having passed my Seamanship examination.

The next step was the Gunnery examination, on board the *Excellent;* and finally I had to be put through my facings at the Royal Naval College examination in the Dockyard.

There were just six weeks before the Vacations, and there was to be one day for each exam. The Gunnery day gave me only a clear fortnight—short notice, certainly; but I thought I would have a try for it, so as to be able to get clear away before the Vacation of July, and not have to begin again later in the year.

I was allowed a room at the Naval College, and went daily to the *Excellent* to work, besides having a crammer at lodgings in Portsea, to whom I repaired at 5 P.M., working with him until seven or eight. Sometimes I began again after dining at the College mess. Things looked bad when I went to the *Excellent.* The instructors told me I had no chance of getting through in a bare fortnight, and that I was evidently below the ordinary standard of knowledge. (No wonder, after so long a period of war and active service.)

However, the eventful day arrived. I began at 10, and by 4 P.M. had got my fifteen crosses (mistakes), sixteen turning you back. Therefore, there was half a cross left; and the subject to be

got through was Drilling Quarters — that is, a battery of guns.

My poor crammer was very anxious: I had promised him an extra fiver if I got through. "Sir," said he, "you have but one chance left, which is that you must give your orders as loud as possible and show all the confidence you can. You must chance your mistakes. Only, sing out, for God's sake, sir, for all you are worth!" Whether my examiner (I can see him now pacing up and down the deck) was becoming tired of his day's work, or whether he had a pity on me, considering the brink he knew I was standing on, I don't know; but he seemed to keep some distance off. Once or twice the men at the guns helped me (when his back was turned) by giving me a hint or otherwise, as they knew whither they ought to go, if I had forgotten some detail in my order. At any rate, I yelled myself hoarse, pretending I knew all about it; and when this exercise was over and the retreat sounded, my crammer said to me, "I think it's all right, sir." Within an hour I was told I had just squeezed through: with fifteen crosses and a half out of a possible sixteen. Good enough for me: all I had wanted was to pass.

I had now a month to get through the remaining ordeal — Navigation, Algebra, Trigonometry and Other Sciences. During that time I rather

enjoyed my stay at the College: there were some good fellows there, as well as one or two very eccentric ones. One in particular touched my fancy. He was a poor chap trying to pass, and had been so for months. He had no hope on the eve of the dreaded day. His only chance was that he might be allowed to stay on at college by getting on the sick list somehow or other. The first time he actually let himself drop some feet down the stairs, and contrived to hurt himself; and the doctors put him on the sick list immediately. Having recovered shortly before the next dreaded day, and finding himself still in the unfortunate fix of not being able to go up for examination with the slightest chance of passing, he took a razor and chopped his shin bone in two or three places so badly that he was enforced to lie up. This always struck me as showing the good stuff he was made of: it was a pity that so courageous a man should be lost to the Service. Unfortunately, his little ruses were detected, and he had to quit.

At the end of my month, I went up not feeling over confident; yet if the sheet happened to be a moderate one it would, I thought, be 6 to 4 on. So it came about: I won in a canter.

On 18th of July 1860, the following letter, written by the Duke of Somerset to my father, followed, shortly after I had passed for Lieutenant.—

The Duke of Somerset presents his compliments to Lord Sandwich, and begs to inform him that he deferred replying to his letter of the 13th until the report of Mr. Montagu's having passed his examination at the Royal Naval College had been received and his case had been laid before the Board of the Admiralty.

The Duke of Somerset has now much pleasure in enclosing a Lieutenant's Commission for Mr. Montagu, dated this day, which has been given him on account of the special services rendered by him in India with the *Pearl's* Naval Brigade.

I should like, before closing this narrative, to offer a few words of advice to youngsters on joining the Navy. The first need is strict compliance with discipline, which at first perhaps is not easy. Discipline has always been, and must continue to be, the mainstay of any public service. With this fact always before him, an officer not only carries out the orders of his superiors, but also acquires the power of enforcing his own orders when he is placed in a position of responsibility. There have been great changes since I joined the Service. Officers and men are much more highly educated. The discipline is no longer the same, and the methods of enforcing it are changed. This only means that influence and character play a more important part than force does. This, again, means that a more delicate and arduous task falls on a youngster who joins the Navy. His tact and his example are more

important than ever; and, with a higher education and another class of men to deal with, his character tells for more every day. He must never forget that he has to set before himself the highest standard of efficiency and conduct at home and abroad, at sea, and on shore. Let him never forget that he is an officer serving under the flag of the Realm which is Mistress of the Seas.

I have written about my midshipman life as being by far the most interesting part of my naval career. The rest ran over a good many years; but, though I had some interesting times, I have no more war service to account for. During my midshipman years fortune favoured me more than is usual in the lot of a naval officer. My only regret (if I may so call it) is that I was not of riper years during the stirring period. Thereby I should have gained more experience for the good of the Service. I remained on in the Navy until 1886; but my deafness (contracted by jungle fever during the Mutiny) increased considerably; and, what with that and other personal affairs, I thought it best, after mature consideration, to retire from the noble profession I could no longer follow with satisfaction to my country or to myself.

THE END

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